5

UNIV. FREIB.

00042448

Digitized with financial assistance from

on 07 January, 2017

DIGITIZED

95

LIFE IN BOMBAY,

42448

AND

THE NEIGHBOURING OUT-STATIONS.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

00042448

"If there's a hole in a' your coats,
I rede you tent it:
A chield's amang you takin' notes,
And faith he'll prent it."

THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,
Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty.
M.D.CCC.LII.

HA-d.6

LONDON:
Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.

TO

CHARLES HAY CAMERON, ESQ.,

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE LAW COMMISSION, AND MEMBER OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF INDIA.

DEAR SIR,

Feeling as I do, that to no one can any work on India be more appropriately dedicated than to the late President of the Law Commission, and Member of the Supreme Council, whose opportunities of forming a correct judgment on the present condition and future capabilities of this mighty Empire, have been only equalled by his ability to discern the same, and his zeal in promoting every useful improvement; I consider it a high privilege and gratification, to be permitted to inscribe to you the present humble attempt to describe the state of society, and to depict some of the more prominent and attractive scenery of this Presidency; of my correctness and truthfulness in executing which, your recent, though

brief visit to Bombay, will enable you to form an accurate estimate. Trusting that you may derive some pleasure from the perusal of the following pages, and heartily wishing that you may long enjoy every comfort and happiness in your present retirement, unless again called upon to exercise in some new sphere those talents and energies which have conferred on India such lasting benefits;

I am, with much esteem and respect,

Dear Sir,

Your very humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

BOMBAY,
DECEMBER 15, 1851.

PREFACE.

THE public have been so long accustomed to contemplate India, either through the magic glass of imagination, as the land of gorgeous palaces and inexhaustible treasures, or through the scarcely less deceptive halo of military glory as the battle-field of contending armies and opposing dynasties; that we feel some serious misgivings, whilst we invite them to survey her with the natural eye, as she really is, in these sober days of peace, when the "hurly-burly" of our battles lost and won has died away, and all that now is heard to

remind us of them, is an occasional shot resounding through the Khyber Pass, and re-echoed from the far-distant mountains of Affghanistan.

For three classes of readers, however, we flatter ourselves our work will be found to possess considerable attraction. Those who have passed many of their most vigourous, and may we not add, some of their happiest days in this country, but have now returned to the land of their nativity, may not feel disinclined to revisit with us the scenes of their former joys and sorrows, and to mark the changes which time has wrought; and those who, like ourselves, are still sojourners in this the land of our temporary adoption, may experience some desire to see their every-day life pourtrayed by one of themselves, and to observe in what light some admired landscape or favourite haunt appears, when transferred to paper by the pencil of the amateur and the art of the lithographer; whilst with somewhat different, though not

less anxious feelings, these pages may be turned over by some fond father or mother who has lately parted from a beloved child, as they accompany us in our different excursions, and mark the modes and habits of our Eastern life, or survey the pictorial representations of those scenes, upon the originals of which, arrayed in all the beauty and grandeur of nature, the object of their affection is now gazing with admiration.

Nor are we without some hope that even the general reader and lover of the picturesque may here find something to amuse and interest him; but the political economist, and ardent reformer, if any such should condescend to open this volume, will look in vain for anything to support their favourite and peculiar theories; for we have neither drawn on futurity, and represented India with her well irrigated plains and branching railroads as the great rival of America, which she may one day become; nor devoted a single chapter to the record of grievances

and abuses, past and present, real or imaginary, to be magically redressed by some patent for the perfecting of human nature, a work more easily effected on paper than in practice.

And though we have entered into no formal dissertation upon men and morals and touched but lightly on things sacred, the christian philanthrophist may discover some facts and circumstances herein set forth which may cheer him on in his labour of love, and perchance suggest to him the safest means of accomplishing the work he has at heart.

It has been found impracticable to publish in one volume the whole of the illustrations we had prepared, which will account for this work appearing in a less complete form than we could have wished; but though conscious of the very imperfect manner in which we have in other respects executed the task we have assigned ourselves, it is a great satisfaction to us to feel that we have steered clear alike of politics and personalities,

and have not introduced a single anecdote, which can offend or wound the feelings of a single individual. Laying "this flattering unction to our soul," we respectfully bid our reader farewell for the present, and invite him to the perusal of the succeeding pages.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

BOMBAY FROM MALABAR HILL . . *Frontispiece.*

VAUCLUSE 37

HINDOO TEMPLE OF MAHALUXMEE . . . 38

BOMBAY FROM BELMONT . . . 41

SEWREE AND THE NEAT'S TONGUE . . . 42

THE WAGNUK (*Wood Cut*) . . . 97

THE ELEPHANT HILL AND TRAVELLERS' BUNGALOW, KHANDALLA 123

THE DUKE'S NOSE 128

CAVE OF KARLI 136

TEMPLE OF PARHUTTEE . . . 164

MALABAR POINT 248

DUMREE MUSJID 294

THE SISTERS' TOMB 303

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Page

ARRIVAL IN BOMBAY—THE HARBOUR—OUTLINE OF ITS HISTORY IN CONNECTION WITH THE BRITISH—ORIGIN OF THE NAME OF BOMBAY 1

CHAPTER II.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS—HOUSES OF BOMBAY—DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENTS—SERVANTS 11

CHAPTER III.

GENERAL NOTICES OF SOCIETY—NECESSITY FOR ANNUAL CHANGE OF SCENE AND AIR—MORNING VISITS—EVENING DRIVES—THE ESPLANADE—THE BREACH—MALABAR HILL—MAZAGON HILL—HORTICULTURAL GARDENS—SEWREE—MAHIM—POPULATION OF BOMBAY 27

CHAPTER IV.

Page

VISITS AND BREAKFASTS AT PARELL—DUTIES OF AN AIDE-DE-CAMP —DINNER PARTY AND BALL AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE—RECEPTIONS—THEATRE—REUNIONS—TONE OF SOCIETY . . . 47

CHAPTER V.

VOYAGE AND LAND JOURNEY TO MAHABULESHWUR—TRAVELLERS' BUNGALOWS—ASCENT OF THE GHAT—DERIVATION OF NAME MAHABULESHWUR—ELPHINSTONE POINT—MOUNT CHARLOTTE—PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS—SOIL AND PRODUCTIONS—KATE'S POINT —AMOUNT OF RAIN—TEMPERATURE OF THE HILLS—CHILDREN OF INDIA 65

CHAPTER VI.

SIDNEY POINT—CLIFTON—GOVERNMENT BUNGALOWS—MEDICAL SUPERINTENDANT—BOMBAY POINT—PURTABGHUR—STORY OF PURTABGHUR—OF SIVAJEE—OF AFZOOL KHAN—PIC-NIC TO PURTABGHUR—PAUNCH GUNNY—WATERFALL NEAR THE SATTARA ROAD—SOCIABILITY OF MAHABULESHWUR—APPROACH OF THE MONSOON 85

CHAPTER VII.

RETURN TO BOMBAY—EXHAUSTION CAUSED BY CLIMATE—PANWELL —CHOWK—KHANDALLA—THE ELEPHANT HILL—CLIFFS AND RAVINE—BOTANICAL RESEARCHES—THE DUKE'S NOSE—PANDEMONIUM POINT 113

CHAPTER VIII.

Page

VILLAGE AND BUNGALOW AT KARLI—CAVE TEMPLES—DESCRIPTION OF LARGE CAVERN—IMPORTUNITY AND NUMBER OF MENDICANTS—FUQUEERS—A BOMBAY FUQUEER—HINDOO BELIEF IN TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS—MYTHOLOGY . . . 131

CHAPTER IX.

DEPARTURE FROM KARLI—ARRIVAL AT POONA—PEISHWA'S PALACE—THE CITY AND THE CAMP—THE SUNGUM—KIRKEE—THE BATTLE OF KIRKEE—DAPOORIE—CLIMATE—HOUSES—ROADS—CHURCH—CITY OF POONA—GAOL—HILL AND TEMPLE OF PARHUTTEE 147

CHAPTER X.

SOCIETY IN POONA—REGIMENTAL EXPENDITURE—THEATRICAL AMUSEMENTS—FANCY BALL—HILL FORTS OF POORUNDHUR, SINGHUR AND WASSOTA—CAPTURE OF WASSOTA—SASSOOR . 167

CHAPTER XI.

THE ELEPHANTA—BOMBAY IN OCTOBER—HAVOC CAUSED BY INSECTS—EVENINGS IN THE VERANDAH—MOONLIGHT NIGHTS—PIC-NICS—A DAY AT ELEPHANTA 191

CHAPTER XII.

BOMBAY IN THE HOT SEASON—PUNKAHS—CHURCHES—THE ELPHINSTONE COLLEGE—PRINCIPLE OF EDUCATION—OLD GOVERNMENT HOUSE—THE TOWN HALL—THE MINT—DOCKS—BYCULLA SCHOOLS—THE JAMSETJEE JEJEEBHOY HOSPITAL—MALABAR POINT 221

CHAPTER XIII.

Page

BOMBAY IN THE RAINS—DINNER PARTY DURING THE RAINS—THE PARSEES — VISIT TO A WEALTHY PARSEE'S HOUSE — DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENTS — FURNITURE — PARSEE LADIES — DRESS—ORNAMENTS—RELIGION—PARSEE TOMBS . . . 251

CHAPTER XIV.

DEPARTURE FOR SEROOR — AHMEDNUGGUR — OUTLINE OF ITS HISTORY—THE EMPEROR AURUNGZEBE—THE FURRAH BHAG—THE BAHEESTY BHAG—THE TOMB OF SOLABHUT KHAN—DUMREE MUSJID—THE HAPPY VALLEY 277

CHAPTER XV.

THE SISTERS' TOMB 299

CHAPTER XVI.

CANTONMENT AND CHURCH OF AHMEDMNUGGUR — CLIMATE — GARDENS — SOCIETY — EXCURSION IN A STEAMER — RESULTS ATTENDANT UPON FREQUENT CHANGE OF STATION AND SOCIETY — CONCLUSION 328

CHAPTER I.

ARRIVAL IN BOMBAY—THE HARBOUR—OUTLINE OF ITS HISTORY IN CONNECTION WITH THE BRITISH—ORIGIN OF THE NAME OF BOMBAY.

LIFE IN BOMBAY.

CHAPTER I.

THE voyage to India, both round the Cape, and viâ Egypt, with all the comfortable monotony of the one, and the fatigue and excitement of the other, has been so often and so fully described, as to be familiar to every one in the present day; with the amiable purpose therefore of sparing the reader the infliction of "a thrice told tale," we pass over all such details, and introduce ourselves in the act of entering the harbour of Bombay.

Beautiful indeed it is! studded with numerous

small islands, and comprising in a single "coup d'œil" every variety of landscape scenery, from the fertile Elephanta covered with the rich vegetation of the tropics, and sparkling like an emerald on the bosom of the waters, to the barren shores of Caranjah, with its rocky headlands projecting boldly, as if in defiance of the softer beauties which surround it. Smaller isles rise, like specks upon a surface, scattered around; whilst in the midst, clearly indicated by its encircling belt of ships and countless buildings, stands the far-famed Island of Bombay. Small as are its dimensions, and although for so long a period after its cession to the English in the year 1661 considered as so utterly unimportant, or rather troublesome an appendage to our territories, perhaps at this moment there is not one spot throughout our wide-spread colonial possessions, to which so great an interest is attached.

In a commercial point of view, the advantages afforded by the situation, and almost unequalled harbour of Bombay, are too manifest, and too generally known to require repetition. Easy of access at every season of

the year, and affording a safe anchoring ground for the largest of ships, the haven is at all times thronged by an almost indescribable variety of vessels, descending through every gradation from the stately London-built East-Indiaman, with its well-appointed crew, and costly cargo, to the primitive native canoe, formed from the bark of a single tree, and contributing, with its modest freight of fruits and vegetables, to supply the markets and bazaars of Bombay.

It was remarked many years ago, by the late lamented Basil Hall, that were he consulted by any individual, who wished as expeditiously and economically as possible to see all that was essentially characteristic of the Oriental world, he would say without hesitation, "Take a trip to Bombay;" and certainly sounder advice was never administered to the inquiring traveller; for upon first landing, the immediate impression which strikes every mind, is not only the immense population of the island, but the unceasing variety of costumes and complexions, betokening the natives of the Asiatic, and

of several European nations. Parsees, Mussulmauns, Hindoos of every caste, Persians, Armenians, Portuguese, and Indo-Britons, literally swarm under the horses' feet as you drive through the bazaars; and it requires no small portion of nerve, as well as dexterity, to steer one's course in safety through streets and roads absolutely alive with human beings, to say nothing of the numerous vehicles, horses, buffaloes, and bullocks which impede one's progress on all sides; invariably bewildering a stranger with the apparently interminable difficulties and dangers to be encountered.

Though it is not our intention to enter into a historical, geological, philosophical, or, in short, any other learned "ical" description of Bombay, it may be as well briefly to remind the reader that it became tributary to the English in A.D. 1661, having formed a part of the marriage portion of the Infanta Catherine of Portugal, when, for her sins, that unhappy woman became the wife of our Charles the Second.

It was, comparatively speaking, a new colony to the Portuguese, having only been in their

possession during the space of one hundred and thirty-one years; that is, from A.D. 1530, when it was ceded to them by a chief of Tannah, in the Island of Salsette, in consideration of some assistance rendered to him in the suppression of an insurrection amongst his turbulent dependants, until the year 1661, when it became finally a tributary to the British Crown.

It was towards the close of the year 1662, that a fleet of five ships, commanded by the Earl of Marlborough, and containing five hundred troops under Sir Abraham Shipman, arrived off Bombay to encounter all the miseries of a strange and insalubrious climate, and the treacherous evasion of the Portuguese governor as to the cession of the island, with the demanded dependencies of Salsette and the adjacent islets; for he even refused to permit the landing of our troops in Bombay, who were consequently driven for shelter to the Island of Anjedeva, situated a little to the southward of Goa.

Here, wasted by disease arising from exposure to the sun, and exhalations from the

deadly, uncleared jungle, our miserable countrymen languished for three years; until, in A.D. 1665, the mortality daily and fearfully increasing, so that the remnant consisted of only one hundred and nineteen men; the sole surviving commanding officer, Mr. Cooke, considered himself justified in relinquishing all claim to the disputed adjacent dependencies; and with a poor assumption of British dignity, he accepted, and immediately occupied the Island of Bombay.

How wonderful does it appear to look back upon this unpromising commencement of our Indian career, and compare it with the proud position which we now occupy, and the immense and widely-spread territory, over which we exercise despotic sway! And it is with a view to the contemplation of this interesting comparison, that we have thus given a rapid sketch of the first occupation of Bombay by the English. Its previous and subsequent history we leave to those far abler hands, who (to borrow the musical language of Martin Tupper)

"Have tuned the harp I faintly touch;"

and hasten forward towards the real object of this work—namely, a description of Bombay and all that belongs to it, both of scenery and society, as they exist in the year of our Lord, 1851.

There is a standing contention to this day between the Hindoos and Portuguese, touching the derivation of the word "Bombay;" the former persisting that its origin is to be traced to the distinctive appellation of their tutelar goddess Bomba, or Momba Devi; the latter asserting that the island was thus named by their first governor, who, struck by the beauty and safety of its harbour exclaimed, "that it was Bom Bahia" (a good bay).

Both definitions are plausible enough; that of the Portuguese being sufficiently evident to every eye; whilst the large and flourishing temple of the goddess Momba Devi is a standing corroboration of the correctness of the Hindoo interpretation. At the present time, the native pronunciation of the word is Moombay; whilst in the days of our early possession, when Dr. Fryer wrote his quaint old book, and first enlightened his countrymen upon the

value of their recent acquisition, he introduced the island to their notice under the name of Bombaim, which he asserts to be merely one of a group of seven, collectively classed as the Islands of Salsette.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS — HOUSES OF BOMBAY — DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENTS — SERVANTS.

CHAPTER II.

And now after this long digression, let us go back to the day of our first arrival in India, and recall the impressions so indelibly fixed upon our minds. At a time when our imagination had been excited to a pitch of enthusiasm by our English notions of Oriental pomp and magnificence, which the appearance of an elegant equipage with turbaned attendants, appropriated to our use, had rather tended to confirm, the reader may conceive our amazement, as (the perils of the bazaars being safely encountered) the carriage suddenly drew up in front of a long, one-storied building, with an over-hanging

thatched roof, and looking, for all the world, like a comfortable English cow-house! In speechless dismay we listened to our companion's assurance that this was actually our destination, our future home; a spot we had so long pictured to ourselves as rivalling the palaces of the Arabian Nights in brilliancy and splendour!

However, we must admit that the similarity to the cow-house extended no further than the exterior; and our drooping spirits began to revive as we stepped direct, without any intervening hall or passage, into a large and elegant drawing-room, supported upon pillars of faultless proportions, and furnished with every modern luxury that either taste could suggest, or wealth command. A large screen of red silk divided this apartment from a spacious dining-room; and the completeness of the remainder of the house bore ample testimony that neither comfort nor appearance is neglected by the Anglo-Indians in the internal arrangements of their domiciles, however slightly they may consider the external.

An entire suite of apartments is appropriated

to the use of each individual, consisting of a bed-room, dressing-room, and bath-room; and one or all of these usually open upon the verandah which surrounds the house, and which is considered indispensable in the construction of even the poorest abode; not only as affording protection from the intolerable glare of the sun during the day, but as presenting an agreeable family resort, when the refreshing evening breeze tempts every one to exchange the heat and lights of the drawing-room for a delightful "réunion" in the open air.

Here, too, conversation flows on more unrestrainedly than beneath the blaze of the numerous lamps, rendered necessary by the extensive dimensions of a Bombay room; and we have often remarked the influence of this witching hour in imparting confidence to the timid and unsealing the lips of the taciturn. But its effect upon one individual of our acquaintance was particularly conspicuous, and upon more than one occasion it has been our privilege to listen in amazement to the outpourings of a superior,

though usually considered, reserved mind; as with rapid eloquence he bore all before him, and made his almost entranced audience forget that this was the man they had hitherto shunned for his apparently unconquerable silence!

It must however be premised, that the above description of a Bombay house refers distinctively to the bungalow, or one-storied building, and is not to be considered as a criterion of the general aspect of English residencies, which are usually lofty and stately-looking mansions, with façades adorned with spacious porticos supported on pillars of sufficient width to admit two carriages abreast, thus insuring to the occupants a sheltered mode of ingress and egress, equally essential during the heat of the fair season and the damp of the monsoon.

The internal arrangement of this description of house is much the same as in England; the ground-floor containing the dining and breakfast rooms, library, &c., and often one or two suites of apartments appropriated as guests' chambers, and which are seldom untenanted for a single

day, in a place where hospitality is decidedly a leading characteristic.

The staircases are generally wide and handsome, conducting to the reception and family rooms; and not unfrequently, a charming withdrawing-room is found on the flat top of the porch by surrounding it with a balustrade, which also serves as a support to a light verandah-like roof.

Though the houses in Bombay are built with all due regard to comfort, and are admirably adapted to the climate, great care being always taken to ensure a free admission of air into every compartment; yet, some time must elapse before the stranger can divest himself of the idea that he is always in public; and vainly he sighs for the unassailable retirement which the announcement of "going to one's own room" always secures at home. The cause of this apparent publicity is evident. To promote a thorough circulation of air, the number of doors and windows is necessarily great; and as even the partition walls are generally constructed of venetians, moveable to the slightest touch, it can be easily understood, that the

first impression produced upon the mind of a "nouvel arrivé," as he enters an Indian bed-room, is, that he is to be the occupant of a magnified bird-cage.

The daily use of the bath can scarcely be classed as a luxury; it becomes an absolute necessary, not only of cleanliness, but of health, in a climate where heat and moisture alternately predominates; and perspiration is consequently so profuse as to require frequent ablutions to maintain an unimpeded action to the pores of the skin. But here are none of the mechanical contrivances for abridging labour, such as the poorest bath-room in England would possess; and even our sturdy housemaids at home would shudder to hear that the large tubs are actually filled by hand! the warm water being conveyed in chatties (or earthen vessels), which never contain more than from one to two gallons! It is, therefore, the entire business of one man to preside over this branch of household work, and indeed where the members of a family are numerous, a second becomes often necessary. This gentleman is termed the Bheesty, or Panee Walla,

and he is always to be seen accompanied by a bullock laden with skins, containing the supply of cold water which is obtained from some neighbouring tank.

Although the number of servants considered indispensable to a moderately constituted Bombay establishment is not nearly so great as in Calcutta or Madras, it is considerably larger than people of corresponding means would ever dream of maintaining in England, where, not only the terrors of taxation, but the alarming appetites of the inmates of a servants' hall, offer a formidable impediment to any superfluity of male domestics. Here, we neither provide bed nor board; for the former a piece of matting thrown upon the ground amply suffices, and upon this the most respectable servant contentedly stretches himself, swathed like an Egyptian mummy, from head to foot, in a white cloth during the warm weather, or in a comblee (coarse blanket) when the cold season makes its appearance. The variety of religions and castes amongst our domestics, is the surest guarantee to us of security from the annoyances of providing food.

Neither Hindoos, Mussulmauns, nor Parsees, would dare to partake of a morsel in the society, or even sight of each other; and so strictly is this separation enforced by their respective priests, that it is imperative even the cooking of their meals should be performed by people of their own community.

Thus it is that our cooks are invariably Portuguese; who, being Christians, are not troubled with scruples regarding the preparation, or, indeed, appropriation of their master's repasts; and, though ostensibly providing their own meat and drink, contrive to live luxuriously and gratuitously on the abundant remnants of an Indian table. These men often attain to great excellence in their profession; a skilful artiste is sure of commanding a good place and high wages; and thus both their cupidity and ambition are exercised to produce dishes, which the most refined epicures fresh from the "cuisines" of Paris and London need not despise. These people generally belong to the Portuguese settlement of Goa, whence they migrate in considerable numbers to Bombay, always

unaccompanied by their wives and children, for whose provision they cheerfully doom themselves to voluntary exile, until the realization of a sufficient sum will enable them to indulge in a six-months' visit to their family and friends at home. The Dirzees, or household tailors, are also generally of this class; as, from their greater approximation in dress and habits to ourselves, it is naturally easier for them to enter into all the mysteries of fashion and fit, than it could possibly be to the Hindoos or Mussulmen.

There is, however, a superior class of Portuguese in Bombay, who occupy with ability the posts of Purvoes, or clerks, in the public or mercantile offices, and are of course considered as aristocrats among their own people. But with few exceptions, these men, whose forefathers were once the lordly possessors of the soil, are in a position of absolute servitude in the present day; and their consequent deterioration, both in a moral and physical point of view, is melancholy to contemplate.

Their habits are proverbially intemperate,

whilst, strange to say, either from the effects of climate, exclusive intermarriage among themselves, or habitual intemperance, the complexion of the Indo-Portuguese is now conspicuously darker than that of the aboriginal natives of Asia.

But all this time, we have proceeded no farther in the formation of our establishment than the Bheesty, cook, and Dirzee department; and lest we should be tempted to another digression, we will hasten at once to enumerate the several functionaries considered indispensable to the correct arrangement of a "maison bien montée" in Bombay.

And first in rank, and in pay, comes the butler, or house steward, as he would be more properly denominated; whose business consists in a general superintendence of the other domestics, in purchasing all articles for household consumption, and cheating his master to the extent of his ability.

In this latter qualification, indeed, few are deficient, their talents for appropriation being usually as capacious, as their insatiability is rapacious.

Then follow the table servants, either two, three, or four in number, according to the size and circumstances of the family, and partially corresponding to our English footmen in their duties of attendance at table, cleaning plate, &c. To these are subordinate, the Musaul, or lamp-lighter, the Hamauls, whose duty it is to keep the house and furniture in cleanliness and order, and a Bobajee, or cook, with his mate, answering to our kitchen-maid at home. Then in the stable department, there must be a coachman to every carriage, and a Gora-walla, or groom, for every horse, and, according to the extent of the garden, from one to six Malleys, or gardeners.

We have not yet touched upon the female department, though forming the most important and influential branch of the establishment. The Ayah is of course exclusively appropriated to the service of the "Madam Sahib," and, when treated with kindness and consideration, generally becomes faithfully attached to her mistress, and quite devoted in her love for the children, or "Baha lagne."

These have also their separate attendants, either in the form of an Amah, or wet nurse, an Ayah or a child's boy, as the men-servants who wait upon the children are designated, let their age be ever so venerable.

We must subjoin to this already long catalogue, the Dhobee, or washerman, with his assistants; and Peons "ad libitum," whose laborious duties consist in sitting all day under the porch to receive, and hand in, the cards of visitors, notes, messages, &c. Altogether, the number of servants in a handsomely conducted English house, generally amounts to between twenty and thirty; and of these, the greater part with their families, reside within the boundaries of their master's estate.

The expense of such an establishment, though not so great as a similar one in England would be, is still considerable; certainly it can never be calculated under £200, and more frequently it amounts to £300, or even £400 per annum. But here, at least, the expense ends; as we are spared

the enormous outlay and endless discomfort, entailed upon the English housekeeper, by the necessity of attending to the provision and accommodation of their never-satisfied dependants.

CHAPTER III.

GENERAL NOTICES OF SOCIETY—NECESSITY FOR ANNUAL CHANGE OF SCENE AND AIR—MORNING VISITS—EVENING DRIVES—THE ESPLANADE—THE BREACH—MALABAR HILL—MAZAGON HILL—HORTICULTURAL GARDENS—SEWREE—MAHIM—POPULATION OF BOMBAY.

CHAPTER III.

The society of Bombay may be cursorily described, as consisting of two grand divisions, usually distinguished in local parlance, as "those who belong to the service, and those who do not." Under the former head are classed all members of the civil, military, and naval departments. The latter comprises the gentlemen of the legal profession, private medical practitioners, and last, though not least, our large and wealthy merchant community.

But before entering into any details of the various ramifications of Bombay society, we

must beg permission to offer a few observations relative to the most striking points of distinction between "men and manners," here and in England.

Foremost in the list, we would particularise the absence of all approach to broad vulgarity in the circles of an Indian salon; and startling as this fact may appear, it is clearly deducible from, firstly, the circumstance that we have neither "parvenus" nor "nouveaux riches" among us to shock one with their upstart airs; and secondly, that with very few exceptions, no one comes to this country without either having laid the foundation, or completed the accomplishment, of a gentleman's education. The youngest ensign, who frequently enters upon his career at the early age of sixteen or seventeen, comes straight from his school, or college; and though we must admit that this early plunge into the independence and temptations of a military life is too often detrimental to the scarcely-developed intellectual faculties, yet to a moderately well-constituted mind, the abundant leisure now at his disposal opens a wide field for exertion and improvement.

With all the pride of opening manhood, he feels that he is no longer considered as a boy, but entitled henceforth to association at the mess-table, on terms of equality, with men whose services and talents command universal admiration and respect.

It is notorious that from this class of half, or rather self-educated youths, have sprung some of the most efficient officers in the Company's service; and one instance is more especially before us in the case of a gentleman, now the able commandant of a corps of irregular horse, who came to this country about five or six-and-twenty years ago a raw, unfledged boy of fifteen, with no other advantages than those of the mere rudiments of education, good principles, and indomitable spirit. His subsequent career has been that of a dashing soldier, an upright magistrate, and a good man. Applying every leisure moment to the acquirement of those practical mechanical arts, which have proved invaluable blessings in the distant and half-civilised districts of India, he is at once the father of his corps, and a most useful servant to Government.

The foregoing observations do not apply to the civilian, who rarely arrives in the country before he has attained to the age of twenty-one; and after a course of severe study, and passing through the ordeal of a collegiate examination, it is to be presumed that he makes his début in India, a scholar in attainment, and a gentleman in address.

We repeat, therefore, that absolute vulgarity, or gross ignorance, is rarely if ever encountered in our circles; and though different degrees of refinement doubtless exist here as elsewhere, the man of cultivated mind will perhaps meet with less to shock his fastidious tastes, than in the necessarily mixed society of England, where the aristocracy of birth, and the aristocracy of wealth, alike struggle for pre-eminence. With neither of these, have we anything to do; our aristocracy is that of age, and precedence is strictly regulated according to the degree of seniority attained in "the Service," beginning with the civilians as the judges and law administrators of the land.

Owing to the relaxing nature of the climate, it is considered essentially necessary for the

preservation of health, to take at least one change during the year to one of the charming places of resort situated above the Ghâts, and within an easy distance of Bombay. Some fortunate individuals, indeed, there are who contrive to absent themselves during the three seasons, when the weather is pleasanter elsewhere than here; and thus by repairing to Mahabuleshwur for the hot months, Poona for the rains, and Khandalla for October, they carve out for themselves a perfection of climate, and consequent redoubled enjoyment of life, such as the untravelled European can scarcely realise.

It is then towards the end of November that Bombay, arousing from its lethargy, begins to look "like a thing of life." Our fashionables flock in from all the adjacent parts, to take possession of their handsome winter quarters; and every gradation of sociability from the snug, round-table dinner party, to the crowded ball is in full requisition.

But we will proceed systematically to detail the usual routine of a day's employment, or, rather "busy idleness" at this season of the

year. The breakfast hour, in most families, is seldom later than ten o'clock; after which, the gentlemen betake themselves to their offices or occupations, and the doors are thrown open for the reception of visitors, who continue to pour in, with little intermission, until the clock striking two, warns the strangers to depart, and summons the family to tiffin. It is considered an act of glaring impropriety in a lady, to invite any gentleman to stay and partake of this meal, who is not either a relative, or an intimate friend of the family; and we must confess it impressed us rather unfavourably touching the hospitality of the good people of Bombay, when upon the memorable occasion of our first visiting tour, and after undergoing the fatigue of paying numerous calls, at far distances, during the hottest hours of the day, not only did we find ourselves everywhere minus the eagerly anticipated offer of refreshment; but at the last house, we actually listened, with parching throats, to the jingling of glasses and plates, which betokened the preparation of the tiffin table in an adjoining room, without these sounds producing any

other effect upon the lady of the house than giving us, by suddenly dropping the conversation, a pretty significant hint to decamp: and accordingly in a state of utter exhaustion we made our parting bows.

This is one of the weaknesses of our social system, but its counterbalancing virtues are manifold; and foremost amongst them, we would place that universal cordiality of manner which greets the stranger upon his first arrival in India, and almost induces him to believe that the stigma of national coldness and reserve which is attached to the English, can extend no further than the foggy precinct of their native isle. It may be, that our icy nature are thawed beneath the genial influence of a milder clime, or (alas! for the poetry of the idea!) it may be, that as every creature's position is here at once marked, the characteristic suspicion of our countrymen is never excited by fruitless endeavours to ascertain who such a person is, and what he has?

Well, we will suppose that tiffin is over, and the fatigue of paying or receiving visits at length overcome; a delightful period of leisure

intervenes before it becomes necessary to arm oneself for new exertion. In former days this time was devoted by the ladies, and indeed too often by the gentlemen, to the enjoyment of a quiet siesta; but experience has taught us wisdom in the present day, and instead of enervating the system, and inducing a tendency to fever by an indulgence in this pernicious habit, these hours are most agreeably filled up by the undisturbed exercise of music, working and reading.

About half-past five, carriages and horses are in requisition for the evening drive, and everybody who is somebody, assembles on the Esplanade, takes a couple of turns on the course, and then draws up on the green to listen to the garrison band, enjoy the sea-breeze, and discuss the gossip of the day. The most remarkable medley of vehicles is here to be seen from the stylish britska, with its elegantly attired occupants, to the humble shigram, as it is called, a strange clumsy-looking article, which bears a striking family-likeness to an English bathing-machine.

The Esplanade is a large level space, formerly

covered with cocoa-nut trees, but now totally unconscious of any symptom of vegetation, beyond the green turf, with which it is carpeted. An excellent road, of about two miles in length, runs through the centre of it, affording an agreeable drive from the harbour on one side, to the commencement of the native bazaars on the other, and running in a parallel line between the fort and Back Bay.

The Esplanade presents a lively scene in the dry weather from the number of tents and temporary bungalows, which spring up, like mushrooms, directly the rains have subsided, on spots of ground apportioned by the authorities for the purpose. Besides the different regiments stationed here, who have of course allotted lines for their tents, all officers who hold appointments in Bombay, either civil or military, are entitled to a compound on the Esplanade; and so delightfully cool is the situation, that very few fail to avail themselves of this privilege, though it entails all the discomforts (serious to a family) of frequent changes of abode.

And next in favour, not only for the evening

drive, but as a place of permanent residence, comes the Breach, which is a flat shore on one side of the island, composed of broken up black rocks, against which the foaming surf is perpetually dashing, presenting to the artist's eye that powerful contrast of black and white, in which the wild genius of a Salvator Rosa would delight to revel. Here, the coast opens boldly upon the south and west, from whence our purest breezes proceed; therefore it can easily be understood that the competition is great, whenever a vacancy is likely to occur among the houses at the Breach.

The sea advances upon the shore in the form of a little bay, which is enclosed on one side by the imposing-looking Hindoo Temple of Mahaluxmee standing proudly on its pedestal of black rock, and on the opposite point by a handsome English residence, named "Vaucluse," which peeps picturesquely from within the surrounding grove of cocoa-nut trees. The intermediate space is well filled up by houses skirting the road, and crowned by a continued line of green heights, from the summit of which

Printed by Dallmondel & Walton.

TEMPLE OF MAHADEVA.

is obtained a capital panoramic view of the entire island.

In the vicinity of the Breach is a beautiful elevation called Malabar Hill, not quite so easy of attainment as the other drives in the island, but well worth the exertion of tugging up the severe ascent which leads to it. Here again the hand of taste has been busy in the erection of numerous bungalows and houses within the last few years, upon every available spot of ground which commands the prospect beneath; and it is almost impossible to conceive a scene of more varied beauty, than is exhibited from the verandahs of some of these abodes. The sea has no longer the dashing and turbulent appearance which it assumes upon the Breach: it was there the open ocean, in all the magnificence of unchained grandeur; but here, as though wearied by its bootless struggles with the Black Rock, it glides smoothly and peacefully into the safe seclusion of the harbour, spreading itself out into a glassy lake below the hill, to form the beautiful creek called Back Bay.

The accompanying sketch* gives but a faint representation of this lovely landscape, commencing with the distant Ghâts which form the northern boundary of Bombay, and add to the interest of the scene by their broken and pointed outline. Beneath them, to the left, lies Elephanta, in its evergreen dress and quiet beauty, well contrasted with the barren-looking Island of Caranjah, which, rising abruptly to the right, overtops the shadowy Ghâts for a time by its rocky pre-eminence; but soon, as if relenting, it permits us, by a sudden dip, to obtain an intermediate glimpse of mountain and water, before they again disappear behind another eccentric elevation.

Immediately under Caranjah, the Fort of Bombay becomes visible, with the spire of the Cathedral, and the steeple of the Scotch church standing conspicuously among the crowded buildings; and the Esplanade extending from the walls of the fort to the sand on the shore of Back Bay, continues its line as far as the commencement of the

* See Frontispiece.

Island of Colabah, which, with the corresponding projection of Malabar Point, terminates the enclosure of the Bay. The cocoa-nut woods of Ghirgaum extend from the native town on the right to the termination of the picture, and far beyond it, and are crowned towards the left by a small eminence called Mazagon Hill, on which several handsome houses have been erected, commanding interesting views of the harbour, and the opposite side of the fort from that already shewn in the sketch taken from Malabar Hill. We subjoin a representation of this scene, as it appears from the drawing-room windows of Belmont, a house charmingly situated on the declivity of Mazagon Hill.

Various other spots in the island are well worth exploring, and amongst these we must not omit to mention the Horticultural Gardens, commenced only a few years back, and now presenting a very thriving and respectable appearance. They are laid out with sufficient taste to form an agreeable promenade in the evenings of the cold season, when at stated times, the indulgence of the Governor's band is permitted.

In the near neighbourhood of the gardens, and situated on the hill immediately over them, is another beautiful point of view, embracing that portion of Salsette known by the name of the Neat's Tongue, the Fort of Sewree, and another sweep of the harbour. This place is called Chinchpoogly, and from its vicinity to the gardens, and the many natural advantages its situation presents to botanist and geologist, it has been selected as the site of a summer residence by one of our leading men in the scientific world.

There is another very pleasant drive, across the Vellarde (or causeway) to a pretty little promontory bearing the romantic appellation of Love Grove, which is said to have originated in the circumstance of this spot having formerly been selected as the grand resort of newly married couples during the honeymoon. Nor was it inappropriately chosen; for before the construction of the Vellarde rendered it so easy of access to all the world, the seclusion was as complete as even the Arabian desert could offer.

Printed by Hullmandel & Walton

SEWREE. THE NEAT'S TONGUE.

The road continues from Love Grove through dense woods of cocoa-nut and date trees, to Mahim; which is a large town situated on the north-western extremity of Bombay, chiefly interesting from having been the first Portuguese settlement on the island. It contains an English custom-house, and a Portuguese church of considerable pretension, kept in perfect repair, and regarded as possessing well authenticated claims to peculiar sanctity. A beautiful Vellarde has been lately completed by the munificent Parsee Knight, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, connecting Mahim with the opposite coast of Salsette, upon which stands the old and pretty town of Bandora, also containing churches and chapels erected by the Portuguese and a few bungalows for the accommodation of English visitors, who find in this place a cool, agreeable change during the hot season in Bombay, when circumstances preclude a more distant trip.

We cannot be surprised that the stigma of extreme insalubrity was so long attached to this island, as, on driving through Mahim, we survey the different localities, formerly selected

by the Portuguese settlers for their abodes. The houses are all built in the very heart of a jungle of palm-trees, so thick as to preclude all circulation of air during the dry weather; whilst in the monsoon, and for a month after, it necessarily changes from a total swamp to a very hot-bed of miasma and fever.

And thus it was that the early settlers were swept off by hundreds; and yet the survivors continued to inhabit these pestilential regions, attracted by the shelter which their shady groves afforded from the powerful rays of the sun; and even long subsequently to the occupation by the English, a voyage thither was accounted somewhat in the light of a forlorn hope, or, at least, tantamount to an excursion to Sierra Leone in the present day. However, we have long abandoned Mahim, with all its shady beauties, to the natives; and gradually, as science and taste took root among our countrymen, they betook themselves to the seaward shores of the island, whereupon to erect their habitations; and this, in conjunction with the constant clearing and draining so unremit-

tingly prosecuted ever since, has effected so salutary a change in the climate and temperature of Bombay, that it is now universally acknowledged to be the healthiest of our three Indian Presidencies.

In corroboration of this statement, we need only call attention to the vast increase of population, which has taken place since the early days of our occupation, when, acccording to Fryer, in the year of our Lord, 1673, the number of inhabitants only amounted to sixty thousand. At a census, taken in 1812, this was found to have increased to two hundred thousand; whilst the minute and accurate survey of the year 1849, proclaimed the residents of Bombay to consist of nearly five hundred thousand souls!

Although, doubtless, much of this almost unprecedented increase of population may be ascribed to the rapidly augmenting wealth and commercial importance of the island; yet, happily, our statistic reports satisfactorily prove, that mortality and sickness have steadily diminished in a proportionate ratio; and we now boldly assert, for the

encouragement of all timid or health-seeking travellers, that no greater risk is incurred by a visit to Bombay than to any of the bleak, and often comfortless watering-places of England.

CHAPTER IV.

VISITS AND BREAKFASTS AT PARELL—DUTIES OF AN AIDE-DE-CAMP—DINNER PARTY AND BALL AT GOVERNMENT HOUSE—RECEPTIONS—THEATRE—REUNIONS—TONE OF SOCIETY.

CHAPTER IV.

THE first imperative duty of society upon the opening of the cold season campaign in Bombay, is to pay our respects at Government House; and this is effected in a double form, when we are so fortunate as to possess a Lady President, by a morning visit to her between the hours of twelve and two o'clock, and breakfasting with the Governor on stated public days, which are always officially announced in the newspapers. The latter ceremony refers of course only to the gentlemen portion of the community, to whom it is of great importance that the mid-hours of the

day should be preserved free from all encroachment upon the duties of their respective offices, and occupations; and this desideratum is secured by the breakfast hour being considerately fixed at half-past nine. It is, on the whole, a hospitable and good old custom, which we should be sorry to see abolished, although it entails the exertion of making a full-dress toilette at so early an hour, to say nothing of the drive to Government House, which is situated at Parell, about six miles distance from the fort.

Upon the conclusion of breakfast, those who present themselves as mere visitors take their departure, but many anxious persons are seen lingering to obtain an audience of the Governor, who have either petitions to proffer, appointments to seek, or arrangements to deprecate; and whatever may be the result of their applications, they are, at least, assured of a courteous hearing, under the present polished administration.

Within the last year or two, another and far more agreeable mode of visiting has been established at Government House, to supersede

the fatiguing and often injurious custom of paying morning calls during the heat of the day; and we only hope that the delicate consideration evinced by the present noble "Vice Queen" of Bombay may be successfully imitated by her successors. Notices are issued that on a specified evening, Lady F—— will hold a "reception" between the hours of ten and twelve; and every one wishing to pay their respects has the power of doing so, without any detriment to dinner engagements at home or abroad; and as the visiting-cards are presented, and names duly entered in the aide-de-camp's book, all purposes are answered, and a very pleasant evening ensues in promenading the well-lighted rooms, listening to the band, and in short, enjoying the easy "abandon" of a conversazione.

These visits are speedily recognised by the issue of invitations for dinners and balls, which are generally distributed with tolerable impartiality since, thanks to the above-mentioned custom of recording the names of visitors, no one can be easily overlooked, unless, indeed, through the inadvertence or personal

pique of the aide-de-camp, to whom this important branch of diplomacy is commonly deputed.

The Government House at Parell, though originally constructed from the ruins of an old Portuguese church, is now a handsome building of modern appearance, containing numerous apartments sufficiently capacious to admit of the exercise of hospitality upon a large and liberal scale; consequently, the dinner-parties upon state occasions often comprise from one to two hundred guests, besides considerable additions in the evening, to enjoy the pleasures of the ball which invariably succeeds.

In a place where the rules of etiquette are so strictly enforced as in Bombay, it may easily be surmised that a tolerable amount of tact is an essential requisite in an aide-de-camp, to carry him with "éclat" through the delicate intricacies of his position. His duties are both manifold and important on the occasion of a large party; involving not only the selection of names for invitation, but the arrangement of all those finer minutiæ

of details, upon which the success of a fête so materially depends. For instance, in this country, where ladies are so greatly in the minority, it is considered of higher importance than elsewhere, that their companions for the dinner-table should be previously appointed, in order to avoid confusion, and repress presumption in those, whose youth or standing do not entitle them to the privilege of escorting a lady.

A list is therefore prepared beforehand by the aide-de-camp, which is rigorously acted upon, and adjusted with the nicest regard to the distinctions of rank, or rather seniority. Thus it frequently happens, that the most charming women are allotted to some prosy old civilian, or mumbling old colonel, whose sole merit consists in his length of service; which would seem to their lively partners, as qualifications entitling them much more consistently to admission into an almshouse, than to a seat by their side.

Oh! vivid is the recollection of our first public dinner at Government House, when, having steered our way by slow but skilful

approaches towards a lady, whose lively sallies and animated conversation had, only the night before, rendered a dinner-party enchanting, we were in the very act of eagerly petitioning for the happiness of escorting her, up rushed an A.D.C., accompanied by a toothless old colonel, with "Mrs. R——, permit me the honour of presenting Colonel —— to you."

With an expression of comic dismay, she threw a parting glance over her shoulder, as she accepted the arm of her venerable escort; and "paired not matched," the couple descended to the dining-room. Every other attempt to obtain a congenial companion was similarly frustrated; and we were at length forced to the mortifying conclusion, that being antique neither in age nor service, we were consequently "nobody;" so falling back as resignedly as might be, into the ranks of the "awkward squad" who brought up the rear, we yawned through three mortal hours of dinner, in the enlivening society of a couple of juvenile middies fresh on shore, and blushing like peonies if a single word were addressed to them.

However, the evening's amusements are shared equally by all, and generally compensate for the previous inevitable weariness of the dinner-table. The A.D.C's are again in active requisition, arranging the dances, introducing partners, and in taking upon themselves the most onerous duties of a host and hostess; they are usually conspicuous for the gentlemanlike assiduity with which they ascertain that none is neglected; and thus the total stranger, or the most unimportant person in the room, has always the power of joining in the pleasures of the dance.

A pleasing instance once came under our immediate notice, at a ball given upon the occasion of some public rejoicing, when consequently, admission was afforded to many, who would not otherwise be entitled to an "entrée" at Government House.

Amongst this class, a rather extraordinary looking woman made her appearance, whose apparent age, and unwieldy figure would certainly never induce a suspicion that they could belong to a votary of Terpsichore; and the good lady remained sitting as the band

struck up the first quadrille. Every couple had taken their place, when one of the aide-de-camps standing near us, was suddenly accosted by a brother A.D.C. with—

"D——, my dear fellow, what the d——l is to be done? That fat old woman says she wants to dance, and there's not a man in the room I would venture to ask to show off with her."

"I will dance with her myself," was the immediate reply; and in less than two minutes, the dashing-looking young officer had made his bow, presented his arm, and led his bulky but elated partner within the circle of the dance; paying her throughout such respectful attention, as effectually to keep within due bounds the merriment of his tittering "vis-à-vis." Absurd as this incident may appear, it yet marks the innate refinement of the real gentleman; and it gave us as much pleasure then to witness, as it now gives to record it.

As the season advances, every description of gaiety thickens fast around us; and those who enter with zest into such scenes, are

scarcely ever disengaged for a single night. Amusements are, however, generally speaking, of a private nature. A concert is a rare occurrence, and all attempts to establish a regular theatrical performance, have hitherto proved failures; it may be from the insufficiency of the company, who (when we have one) are greatly dependent upon amateur volunteers, or that a taste for the drama is as much on the decline here as in England.

A series of subscription balls, or réunions, is the only successfully established public amusement in Bombay, and this is carried on with tolerable spirit and liberality throughout the season; all arrangements being under the control of a selected number of gentlemen stewards.

Although we do not pretend to say that the general tone of conversational society in India, could stand any competition with the "full flow of talk" which the literary circles of London exhibit, yet we have no hesitation in unscrupulously stating, that it is incomparably superior to what is usually met with

in the provincial coteries of England. This assertion is referable to the before-mentioned fact, that every one is, in a measure, an educated man before he sets his foot upon the shores of Bombay. We do not answer for the other Presidencies. We know nothing of them; and it is highly probable that Calcutta alone may offer a wider field for the incursions of penniless speculators, who, in the engrossing pursuit of riches, have neither time nor inclination to remedy the deficiencies caused by early neglect; and when at length the acquisition of wealth may entitle them to enter the precincts of society, their uncultivated minds can shed no lustre upon the scenes they frequent, but which they do not adorn. We are merely supposing the possibility of the case, as deducible from the actual insignificance of Bombay when compared with Calcutta, and the consequent slighter inducement which it offers as a settling point to the needy or ignorant adventurer.

Here, as in every other civilized part of the world, the lawyers are always conspicuous among the shining lights of society; and, as a Frenchman would say, "il va sans dire"

that it should be so from the perfection of their education, and the thorough insight into human nature to which the exercise of their profession inevitably leads.

A tropical country does not admit of that field for the display of forensic eloquence, which the crowded law courts of England present. There the graces of elocution may well be cultivated with the certainty of exciting the plaudits of an admiring audience; but no such reward, no such beacon of encouragement awaits the aspiring barrister of India. Excepting on rare occasions of deep or general interest, few would expose themselves to the oppressive heat of a court-house thronged by natives, to listen to the details of any case; and it can scarcely be a matter of blame or surprise that the actual business should be hurried onward, and brought to a conclusion as rapidly as the administration of justice will allow.

The most wealthy clients are usually found amongst the Parsees, who, as a general rule, cannot certainly be designated as a talkative race; though possessed of as much acuteness

and intelligence as the European. As an exemplification of their ideas of unnecessary oratorical display, we annex a rather amusing instance which came under our observation not very long ago.

A well-known and influential Parsee was endeavouring to impress upon a young barrister the most effectual means of distinguishing himself, and gaining both clients and popularity.

"We do not," said he, "care for too much plenty words, but we like this thing you know," throwing his arms about with the funniest imitation of declamatory action.

But where the glorious gift of eloquence exists, though for a time it may be dimmed, it cannot be extinguished; though obscured it cannot be quenched; and when repressed in public, naturally finds for itself a vent within the limits of social life. Did we not desire to avoid all invidious distinctions and personalities, we might easily particularise how often the refined wit of a H——, the irresistible humour of a C——, and the provokingly incontrovertible arguments of a

D——, have contributed to render the dinner table a

"Feast of reason, and a flow of soul."

That feeling of exile, oppressive even to pain, which formerly weighed so heavily upon every heart, after a protracted residence in India, is now in a great measure passed away, or at least much ameliorated, since the establishment of the Overland communication has tended almost to annihilate time and space, by bringing to us, twice within every month, the eagerly coveted tidings from

"Those we've left behind us."

In case of sickness, or any sudden emergency calling us home, we may calculate with tolerable certainty, upon hailing our native shores within one month from the day of departure. This reflection greatly contributes towards the maintenance of a cheerful frame of mind, and consequent increase of happiness amongst us; though few indeed there are, who can think for a

moment on the beloved land of their birth without casting

"One longing, ling'ring look behind;"

and earnestly trusting that they may finally sleep in peace, beside their fathers, in their father-land.

Oh! terrible in its acuteness does this feeling become, as we follow a compatriot to his last home; and weep in anguish at the recollection, that his distant grave will never be hallowed by the tear of affection; no loving kindred will hover round the spot, where he lies desolate, alone! In this country, the approach of death is not, as in England, by slow, insidious steps; but with strides of startling rapidity the victim is overtaken; and many an awful instance have we known, where the sun has risen upon a fellow creature in the full enjoyment of life and health, and before it set, has seen him laid low in the dust.

Not even the most determined pleasure-seeker can long witness these scenes, without being impressed by the uncertainty of this life, and the urgent necessity of preparing for that

which is to come. Great indeed is the privilege, though deep the responsibility of the Indian pastor! In using his utmost efforts to cultivate the good seed implanted within our hearts, and in striving to arouse us alike from apathetic indifference to our religious state, or too great an indulgence in the pleasures of this life, which are given us "to use, but not to abuse;" his career, as a faithful minister of Christ's flock, must be one continued round of anxious labour and love.

Thanks be to God! we have such men among us—men equally well fitted to awaken from the pulpit our slumbering energies, by teaching us, in the words of one of our most zealous chaplains, that "God works in us, and with us, but never without us," and to cheer the closing hours of the dying sinner, by showing him where to cast his burden and by imparting the Saviour's assurances of pardon, and peace to the true penitent; so dispelling the terrors of death, that even amidst the struggles of decaying mortality, "The face grows beautiful, as the soul nears God."

CHAPTER V.

VOYAGE AND LAND JOURNEY TO MAHABULESHWUR—TRAVELLERS' BUNGALOWS—ASSENT OF THE GHAT—DERIVATION OF NAME MAHABULESHWUR—ELPHINSTONE POINT—MOUNT CHARLOTTE—PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS—SOIL AND PRODUCTIONS, &C.—KATE'S POINT—AMOUNT OF RAIN—TEMPERATURE OF THE HILLS—CHILDREN OF INDIA.

CHAPTER V.

THE season is over, and, as March approaches, the retired votary of pleasure, and the drooping invalid, are reminded by the increasing heat to seek for a renovation of health and spirits by an excursion to the Mahabuleshwur hills, the most favourite sanitary station of this side of India. At this season of the year the trip is easily and expeditiously effected, by proceeding per steamer down the coast as far as Bancoot, a distance of about seventy miles, and thence in a bunder-boat up the pretty Lawitree river to Mhar, thirty miles further. This is a large native town, conve-

niently situated on the banks of the river, but so hot, dirty, and disagreeable, that no one would willingly remain a moment beyond the time necessary for refreshment, and arrangements for the twenty-seven miles of land journey still to be accomplished.

Here was our first experience of a traveller's bungalow, which, though in our total ignorance, we then looked upon with the utmost contempt, we have since learnt to prize as an inestimable comfort in the otherwise shelterless journeys of India. These buildings are erected by Government for the accommodation of travellers, and generally contain from two to four rooms, scantily provided with the barest necessaries of furniture, and, excepting on well-frequented roads, often possessing no messman (or landlord) to minister to the wants of the hungry visitants. These things are, however, well understood, and a considerable portion of foresight and providence is speedily acquired under circumstances where necessity has no law, and the traveller must either make a proper provision for his journey, or starve.

The little expedition to Mahabuleshwur is

now so smooth and straightforward, that the stranger is almost disappointed at the perfect ease with which it is performed, and at the absence of everything approaching to an adventure in the beautiful tract of country between Mhar and Kaneishwar, a village situated at the foot of the Ghâts. Even the shadowy romance attached to one's pre-conceived notions of midnight palanquin travelling, surrounded by numerous bearers, scaring with their flashing torches the prowling tiger, fiercely glaring from the adjacent jungle, was quickly dispelled as we stepped into a comfortable public conveyance, called a stage-phaeton, and jogged along with a degree of homely safety and certainty totally incompatible with the former high-flown ideas of eastern pomp, and eastern perils, until we approached the foot of the Ghâts, where it became necessary to exchange the phaeton for a palanquin, in order to accomplish the precipitous ascent in comfort and security.

The grandeur of the scenery is beyond description, as we wind up this magnificent chain of mountains, which rise abruptly from

the flat Concan, to an elevation of four thousand seven hundred feet above the level of the sea; the whole clothed in the richest verdure, and presenting at every turn of the path some new and startling feature of beauty, from the towering peak, with its summit concealed in the clouds, to the gushing waterfall, bounding and sparkling like sunbeams through the clefted rocks, until it finds itself a bed in the placid river which flows beneath.

Day was just breaking as we commenced the ascent, and never before did we experience so vivid a perception, so perfect a realisation of these exquisite lines

> "Night wanes—the vapours round the mountains curl'd
> Melt into morn, and light awakes the world."

The clouds slowly unwreathed themselves from the heights they had encircled during the past night, and appeared to roll downwards with majestic reluctance, as if in obedience to the imperative summons of the approaching god of day. The scene was grand, and the effect upon the mind almost overpowering; but soon this feeling of exultation subsided into an

extreme exhilaration of the animal spirits, as involuntary as though we had swallowed a tolerable dose of laughing-gas, and recklessly bid defiance to the grovelling cares of the world below. This, we afterwards learnt, is a very common effect attendant upon a first view of such magnificent scenery, in conjunction with inhaling the highly-rarified air of these stupendous mountain heights; and though this great excitability naturally abates as the eye becomes accustomed to the grandeur which surrounds it, there remains a degree of elevation of spirit, and consequent increased energy of mind and body, which greatly add to the enjoyment and benefit of a trip to "the hills."

The ascent of the Ghát occupies about four or five hours, and on reaching the table-land at the top, we were greeted by the sight of well-made roads, neatly thatched bungalows, picturesquely distributed over a space of several miles, and in short, of every evidence of civilised life and comfort, which English enterprise, and English wealth can cause to spring into life, even though located between four and five thousand feet above the level of the sea.

Strange to say, we have no authentic account of the first discovery of these hills. The earliest information that exists regarding them is, that they were visited by Colonel Lodwick in the hot season of 1824, at a considerable personal risk, from the vast numbers of tigers, bears, and cheetas, which infested these unexplored regions; and, notwithstanding his report of the wonders of the climate and scenery, the obstacles and dangers were considered so insurmountable, that no steps were taken to establish a station until the year 1828, when the present one was founded by Sir John Malcolm, then Governor of Bombay, and named by the Rajah of Sattara in honour of him, Malcolm Peth.

The derivation of the word Mahabuleshwur, is supposed to be from the three Mahratta words, "Maha," "hut," and "eeshwur," which signify "the God of great power," bearing that poetical adaptation to the circumstances of the case, which invariably characterises the Oriental phraseology. But who can behold the glories of the varied scene, which the eye takes in almost at a

single glance, the countless mountains, as yet untrodden by the foot of man; the deep, gloomy ravines, unfathomable but by the beast of prey; the cliffs, which rise in naked majesty, proudly surveying the thunder clouds as they form, and burst beneath them; who, we ask, can look upon this scene of awful beauty, and not feel in his inmost heart, that He who created it is "the God of great power?"

Mahabuleshwur, properly so called, is a Brahminical village, situated about three miles from the English station of Malcolm Peth, though on the same line of table-land. It possesses a temple dedicated to the God Mahodeo, of considerable architectural beauty, and great reputed sanctity, being erected on the spot, whence the Holy Krishna takes its source. A smaller temple stands on the brink of a precipice, fringed with the bristling milk bush, and overlooking the valley through which the infant stream pursues its thread-like course; perceptibly widening, however, as contributions from the mountain rivulets gush freely in, until at length, swollen into a noble river, it sweeps proudly down the

opposing Ghât, receiving throughout its far-spread progress, the universal homage of the idolatrous Hindoos.

The village of Mahabuleshwur is on the high road to Elphinstone Point, one of the principal objects of attraction to every one who visits the hills. It is a cliff of immense height, with the point projecting considerably beyond the base, so that the eye of the spectator looks direct down a fall of three thousand feet, into the valleys of the Concan below! This view struck us as being too terrific to be pleasing; there is a greater appearance of monotony in the comparatively pigmy undulations of the surrounding eminences, than in any other part of the hills; and it appeared to us, that the much talked-of wonders of Elphinstone Point showed to greater advantage on being looked at from a distance, than on being looked from.

The oldest English residence of this station is Mount Charlotte, built by Sir John Malcolm, and thus named in honour of his daughter. It is said to stand upon the highest inhabited point of the hills, though the neigh-

bouring elevation of Mount Malcolm rises to an elevation of nearly two hundred feet above it. This lovely spot is now the property of the venerable Bishop of Bombay, who previous to his departure for England, here made his highland home during a portion of every year, and greatly improved its many natural advantages by the addition of a large garden and cultivated grounds.

The terrace which surrounds the house commands one of the most extensive views of the station, embracing in the distance Muckrunghur (commonly called from its appearance, the Sadde Hill), and a continuation of Ghát scenery, varied and grotesque in outline extending beyond the reach of any human eye. But the nearer prospect is one of extreme and softened loveliness, including some of the most tastefully situated bungalows on the hills; and conspicuous amongst them, supported by its shining white pillars, stands Glen Ogle, appearing like a fairy bower in a garden of beauty; Bohemia, the usual residence of the Governor, or Commander-in-chief, built upon a mere shelf of rock

overhanging a deep ravine; and Mount Douglas, whose dark-thatched roof forms the crowning point of the wooded height from which it peeps.

The principal public buildings of interest consist of, first, the neat little church, built by private subscription some years ago, and capable of containing about one hundred and eighty people; a sanitarium for the reception of sick officers; and a tolerably well furnished circulating library, a great desideratum in a place where relaxation is the order of the day, and where consequently all that contributes to render the "dolce far niente" life more agreeable is eagerly seized upon.

In the centre of the station and close to the church, a monument has been erected to the memory of Sir Sidney Beckwith, who, as Commander-in-chief and senior member of council, temporarily succeeded Sir John Malcolm, as Governor of Bombay in 1830, and died here the following year. The colour of the soil at Mahabuleshwur adds much to the general effect of the landscape. It is of a vivid red, and is a description of clay, formed by

the union of a disintegrated ferruginous clay stone, with the "débris" of trap rock; and in places where considerable portions of decayed vegetable matter are intermixed, a most fertile mould is produced, bearing spontaneously a profusion of brilliant coloured flowers, and an abundant supply of the pretty white blossomed curcuma, from the root of which an excellent kind of arrowroot is obtained. But what most tends to gladden the heart of the English resident, is to find large tracts of country literally covered with the beautiful fern, (pteris aduillina) never met with in these latitudes below a certain elevation; and who can wonder if its feathery, branch-like leaves, are welcomed with rapturous emotions, as emblems of the home we may never see again!

Some industrious Chinamen have settled upon these hills, and contrive to make a comfortable livelihood by the cultivation of large gardens, producing abundance of excellent potatoes, and almost every description of European fruits and vegetables, which thrive in this climate surpassingly well even now, and

in the course of a few years, will doubtless be brought to full perfection.

Towards the north side of the station, the landscape assumes a more barren and uninteresting appearance, which has been happily improved by the formation of an artificial lake, extending upwards of a mile in length, and constructed by the late Rajah of Sattara. This not only secures a large and unfailing supply of water for the purposes of cultivation, but has induced the construction of a variety of agreeable drives, and bridle paths, leading to many points of interest, which might otherwise have remained undiscovered.

A very popular excursion for a pic-nic party, or social drive, is to Kate's Point, a remarkable looking rock about four miles from the church, and approached by a pretty road winding down to the margin of the lake, from whence it diverges into rough and broken paths, over which we scrambled as best we could, trusting to the sure footing of our tattoos, or country ponies. This singular cliff at first sight, gives one the idea of a gigantic needle's head, so large is the perforation

admitting a distinct view of the mountain ridges behind it. It forms a natural tunnel under the point, which rises perpendicularly on one side, over the valley of the Whye, and falls gradually on the other, into platforms of the rock, which render it perfectly accessible to the foot of man. The most striking feature in the scenery, after the point itself, is the fluted appearance of the mountain's sides, occasioned by the torrents of rain perpetually rushing down during the monsoon, which unimpeded in their progress by a single tree, form innumerable channels, crossing and intersecting each other like the veins of a leaf, and all contributing to swell the infant streams of the three rivers, which have their source in this valley. We allude to the Kristna or Krishna, the Yena, and the Keyna, which all take their course towards the Deccan; besides these, two other rivers rise amid the hills of Mahabuleshwur, the Sawitree, and the Gawitree; which taking an opposite direction, flow over the western side of the Ghât, to fertilize with their waters the lowlands of the Concan.

The amount of rain which falls here during

the monsoon months, bears a great disproportion to that of the surrounding country, and renders the place uninhabitable even to the natives. It is completely enveloped in mist and cloud, which do not disperse until some time after the weather has cleared up in the lower regions; and those imprudent people who rashly visit the hills early in October, have not unfrequently to encounter all the miseries of finding their bungalows thoroughly saturated with damp. Indeed, we have known instances where the occupants have been obliged to walk about the house armed with umbrellas and clogs, whilst the floors of the different apartments presented the extraordinary spectacle of being covered by tubs and every description of vessel to receive the rain, steadily pattering, quite at its ease, through the roof, which acted as a sieve.

It is calculated that the number of days on which rain falls at Mahabuleshwur is one hundred and twenty-seven, the average amount being two hundred and twenty-nine inches, whilst that of Bombay is only seventy-

five; and in Poma, and indeed throughout the Deccan, a fall of nineteen inches is considered a very fair and favourable monsoon, quite sufficient to ensure a healthy season, and to answer all agricultural purposes. The mean annual temperature of the station is said to be 66°; during the rainy season 63° 8′, and even in the very height of the hot weather, it seldom exceeds 72°, at the same time that in the country below, and within a few hours' ride of the hills, the thermometer stands at 110°.

The blessing of possessing such an accessible place of resort is incalculable; and many a painful separation in domestic life has been averted, in cases where the failing health of a delicate wife, or drooping child would have elicited the imperative medical order of a voyage to England, had not the happy resource of a trip to the hills existed.

One of the most crying evils of an Indian life is the necessity entailed upon parents of parting from their offspring at so tender an age, that the heart is wrung with agony at the bare idea of committing them to the charge

of strangers; but this is unavoidable, not only as regards health, but education. In most children the constitution, after six or seven years of age, becomes visibly enfeebled, and the general lassitude which pervades the system renders an application to study almost impracticable, and warns the parents that it is time for their treasures to depart.

It has often struck us, with reference to these little creatures, that although everywhere engaging, they are here peculiarly objects of passionate love, whether from the consciousness that they must so soon disappear, or that they are actually more attractive from the circumstances which are inevitable in an Indian household. Unshackled by the discipline of an English nursery, and the tyranny of a head nurse, both of which tend to engender a spirit of reserve and even cunning, they roam at will through every part of the house, prattling with all the artlessness of fearless childhood, and effectually twining themselves round the affections of every member of the family, and visitor to the house; whilst to the native servants they are objects of positive

idolatry. Great care and watchfulness are requisite on the part of a mother, to prevent the evil effects which might result from the overwhelming indulgence which the Ayahs especially are too apt to bestow upon their little charges.

CHAPTER VI.

SIDNEY POINT—CLIFTON—GOVERNMENT BUNGALOWS—MEDICAL SUPERINTENDANT—BOMBAY POINT—PURTABGHUR—STORY OF PURTABGHUR—OF SIVAJEE—OF AFZOOL KHAN—PICNIC TO PURTABGHUR—PAUNCH GUNNY—WATERFALL NEAR THE SATTARA ROAD—SOCIABILITY OF MAHABULESHWUR—APPROACH OF THE MONSOON.

CHAPTER VI.

In a place so greatly abounding with picturesque scenery, as Mahabuleshwur, it becomes almost impossible to particularise the many objects of interest which tempt the enterprising visitors to constant exertion, and induce a general spirit of sociability in the arrangement of pic-nic parties, riding and sporting excursions. We must not, however, omit to mention in our catalogue of remarkable spots, the beautiful elevation called Sidney Point, situated about two miles from the church, and commanding an imposing view of Elphinstone Point and the Concan on one

side, whilst on the other it looks down abruptly upon the lovely vale of Clifton, thickly studded with pretty bungalows, and presenting a scene so calm and home-like, as it lies in its quiet beauty, guarded by lofty encircling cliffs, as may well suggest a train of thought the very reverse of that, so lately aroused by the contemplation of the wild grandeur of the opposite side. It is in the valley of Clifton principally, that several bungalows have been erected by Government for the accommodation of sick officers and their families; thereby ensuring a greater degree of comfort and privacy, than could be obtained at the sanitarium, and at a rent sufficiently moderate to come within the means of a married subaltern.

These dwellings are placed under the control of the medical officer, who acts as general superintendant of the station, residing here entirely from October to June, and at Sattara, or Poona, during the four months of the monsoon. Upon the energy and activity of this officer depends much of the enjoyment to be experienced in a visit to the hills. His

multifarious duties comprise those of a magistrate, post-master, doctor, and indeed universal referee to the entire of the inhabitants; with him rests the important arrangements for dák travelling, and the employment of the Chinese convicts confined in the jail, whose services have been turned to considerable account of late years, in the formation of excellent carriage roads, and bridle paths, which, intersecting the station for an extent of nearly fifty miles, throw open every point of interest in the varied scenery of the hills.

Amongst these, one conspicuously worthy of notice, and selected by general consent as a place of rendezvous, during the evening drive, is a spot situated at the top of the Ghát on the Concan side, and known by the name of Bombay Point. The grand feature of this scene is the perfect view it presents of the mountain fortress of Purtabghur, which formed part of the Sattara territory, and was a favourite occasional residence of the late Rajah up to the time of his death.

One of the most extraordinary events recorded in Indian history, is so intimately

connected with this place, that a short narrative of the circumstances may not be here deemed uninteresting.

The celebrated hill-fort of Purtabghur situated on the Par Ghát, in the wildest part of the Mahabuleshwur hills, is a place not only of great natural strength, but so much improved by art, as to have been long considered impregnable by the natives. It stands on the very summit of the Ghát, which precipitously overhangs the village of Par, forming an imposing object to the whole surrounding country. It was built in A.D. 1656, by the renowned Sivajee, the founder of the Mahratta empire, who intended it as a frontier position, to secure his conquests between the rivers Necra and Quyna, or Hoyna. It was erected under the superintendence of a Brahmin named Moro Trimmul Pingley, who executed the work so greatly to the satisfaction of his royal master, that he was in consequence raised to one of the highest offices in the state.

Sivajee commenced life as a Jagheerdar, or small landed proprietor, under the Ma-

hommedan government of Beejapore; but either from some fancied injustice, or an innate restlessness of disposition, he early asserted his independence, by degrees collected a large army, and by a series of bold manœuvres succeeded in subjugating a considerable portion of the Deccan and Concan; subsequently exercising over them a sovereign and despotic sway.

The Beejapore government of which he was the born vassal, had at first with unaccountable supineness, scarcely interfered in his singular career; but at length taking alarm at his rapidly increasing power, they assembled an army of five thousand horse, and seven thousand chosen infantry, with a formidable train of artillery, which was despatched against him in September 1659, under the command of Afzool Khan, an officer of high rank, and considerable reputation as a soldier.

Sivajee, on their approach, retreated to his stronghold Purtabghur; and Afzool Khan who had with great difficulty conducted his army through the wild and mountainous regions

that lay in his route, at last encamped at the village of Par, situated at the foot of Purtabghur, in the midst of an almost impenetrable jungle; and alarmed by the appearance and reputed impregnability of the fortress towering above them, he forthwith commenced negociations with his rebellious opponent.

It was now that Sivajee conceived and matured the plot, which according to European notions has conferred upon his name the infamous notoriety of a treacherous assassin, though by his countrymen considered as a deed of bold and daring genius, of which a great warrior alone was capable. He commenced operations in this way. Having by the most humble messages and promises of submission, completely thrown Afzool Khan off his guard, a day was fixed for a personal conference between the two chiefs, and in the meantime, Sivajee secretly ordered up from the lowlands six thousand of his troops, under the command of Netajee Palkar, with instructions to proceed, through bye-paths, to a thick forest lying on the east of

the fort, in the vicinity of the invading army, and to rush out and attack them on a pre-arranged signal to be given by sound of trumpet.

Moro Trummel, the engineer, who appears to have been a man of universal ability, was with an equal force placed in ambuscade in another direction. A space below the fort, about half way down the mountain, was cleared for the interview, and on the appointed day Sivajee treacherously put on a suit of chain armour under his clothes, fixed a wagnuk (or tigerclaw) within his left hand, concealed a small dagger in the folds of his sleeve, and thus apparently unarmed he descended from the fort to meet Afzool Khan, who was unsuspiciously approaching. It had been previously agreed upon, that each chief should be attended only by a single armed follower. Afzool Khan appeared, wearing his sword as usual, but the sabre of Sivajee was consigned to the charge of his follower, who carried it in his cummerhund (or girdle); but as nothing is more common than the practice of wearing two swords among the Mahratta soldiers, this circumstance excited

no notice. As the two chiefs approached, a Brahmin attaché of the Khan, but who was in the interest of Sivajee, contrived to keep back the armed follower of Afzool a few paces, by exclaiming, "Stop! see you not that our master is armed? If you both approach, Sivajee will suspect treachery." The two chiefs had by this time closed, and were introduced to each other by the Brahmin; they embraced in the usual Oriental fashion, but in the very act, Sivajee struck the artfully-concealed wagnuk deep into the bowels of the unfortunate Afzool Khan; then dexterously extricating his hand, and leaving the horrid weapon in the body of the Khan, he drew forth the dagger, and plunged it into his breast.

Afzool Khan exclaiming, "Treacherous idolater!" rapidly unsheathed his sword, and made a desperate cut at Sivajee, which, however, could not penetrate the concealed armour; and with all the power of his gigantic strength, Sivajee closed upon his wounded opponent, wrested the sword from his hand, and threw him dying on the ground. All this was the work of a single instant. The faithful follower

of Afzool, struck with rage and horror, rushed to the rescue of his unhappy master, and refusing the offered quarter, bravely maintained a desperate and unequal fight with Sivajee and his attendant, until he also was overpowered and fell. Some Mahratta soldiers who had been placed in ambush close by, now hastened to the spot, cut off the head of Afzool Khan, and carried it in triumph within the gates of the fort, from whence it was quickly visible, elevated upon a pole, and proclaiming by its ghastly stare, the foul deed which had just been perpetrated.

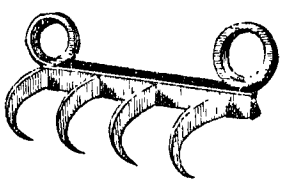
The mountain echoes around now resounded with the trumpet's loud-toned signals; the entire Mahratta country emerged from their ambuscade, and bore down with irresistible fury upon the panic-struck Mahommedans who, taken completely by surprise, were speedily routed and dispersed with great slaughter. Numbers of them attempting to escape, perished miserably in the wilds, devoured by tigers, or other beasts of prey; and many, unable to contend against the horrors they had to encounter, returned to surrender

themselves at the gates of Purtabghur, to what they considered an inevitable but less lingering death. However, to the honour of Sivajee be it spoken, all the prisoners were received and treated with the utmost humanity.

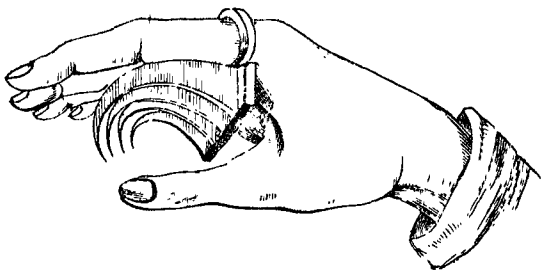
From this date, the power of Sivajee rapidly increased; and he thus not only laid the foundation, but firmly established the dominion of the great Mahratta dynasty, which lasted until the downfal of the Pushwa in the year 1817. That same year the fort of Purtabghur surrendered to a British force, commanded by Colonel Prother, after a very slight resistance. The Mahrattas of the present day speak with pride and exultation of this feat of the great Sivajee, which, according to their ideas, was not only justifiable, but highly to be commended.

The wagnuk is a small steel instrument, with four curved and sharply-pointed spikes, attached by a light bar to two rings passing over the fore and little fingers; so that the weapon itself is totally concealed within the hand, and strikes the victim with all the force and deadly aim of the tiger's claw, from whence it derives its name.

The identical wagnuk, with which the murder was committed, is still exhibited in the armoury of the late Rajah of Sattara, as well as the celebrated sword of Sivajee, called "Bowanee."



THE WAGNUK WITH WHICH SIVAJEE MURDERED AFZOOL KHAN; DRAWN FROM THE ORIGINAL AT SATTARA.



MANNER OF USING THE WAGNUK.

The scene of this tragic story could scarcely fail of being a leading object of interest to every one who visits Mahabuleshwur; and a very short time elapsed after our arrival before we joined a gay party of ladies and gentlemen in a pic-nic excursion to Purtabghur. Setting the power of the sun in these mountain regions at defiance, we all started, after an early breakfast, about nine o'clock; the most venturesome amongst the gentlemen on horseback, but the majority joining the ladies' procession in

palanquins and tonjons. We proceeded by the regular Bombay road, down the Rotunda Ghát, as far as the village of Par, where a general halt, to rest the hamauls (or bearers) took place, previously to commencing the terrific ascent towards the fort. The sure-footedness of the hamauls appeared almost miraculous as they made their way up the narrow, precipitous path, in some places nearly perpendicular, and rendered still more dangerous by the dry, loose soil, and fragments of rolling-stone which frequently caused a slide, though never a fall. On they went, bearing up with apparent ease the heavy palanquins, in comparison with which English sedan-chairs are mere feathers; and never once did we detect even a false step, until a serious accident had nearly occurred, in consequence of one of the horses missing his footing, and falling back upon a tanjon immediately behind. However, the skill and presence of mind exhibited by the rider saved the whole party from destruction. In the act of falling, he seized a firm hold with one arm of the projecting branch of a tree, which providentially stood in

the way, and with the other, he held up by sheer strength the terrified animal until a disengaged hamaul sprang to his assistance, and thus gallantly averted the apparently inevitable overthrow of the long line of tonjons and palanquins in single file up the ascent.

Considerably more than halfway up the mountain, a small path branches off to the right, and leads to the memorable spot where the murder of poor Afzool Khan is said to have taken place. It is a natural platform of the rock, increased by art, and now enclosed by an open tower, erected as a memorial of the tragedy which was here enacted. The natives affirm that the body of the unfortunate Khan is buried beneath; but this story does not appear to be well authenticated; nor indeed is it probable, from the circumstances of Sivajee being a Hindoo, and therefore not likely to depart from the customs of his people (who invariably burn their dead) by bestowing the rites of sepulture upon a murdered foe, and a professor of the Mahommedan faith.

The path becomes more and more precipitous towards the summit of the mountain, and termi-

nates in a flight of steep steps hewn out of the rock, which form the only approach to the fort, by which it is so completely overlooked, that not even a dog could make his way undiscovered. In observing the vast natural advantages of the situation, and the enormous thickness and strength of the battlemented walls still in high preservation, the mind is filled with amazement, not that the fort should have been so long considered impregnable, but that anything short of an earthquake could have accomplished its downfal.

After many exclamations of fatigue from the ladies, who were all obliged to climb these steps on foot, the party was safely received within the gates of the fort, and we lost no time in availing ourselves of the previously obtained permission to enter the Rajah's palace, and rest awhile after the labours of the ascent.

What a notion the good heroes of old had of a palace! We passed through a suite of gloomy low roofed dens, looking much more like dungeons than the sleeping rooms of a royal abode; until we reached the state apart-

ment where the Rajah held his Durbar, and which was then "en grande tenue," in expectation of a visit from His Highness. How will the readers laugh—to hear that the preparations for this royal arrival consisted, firstly, in sweeping down the bare walls and floors, (rather a rare occurrence by the way in Eastern households) and secondly, in spreading on the ground a piece of old carpet and a pile of dirty cushions, all bearing such evident signs of antiquity, that we have little doubt they were contemporaries of Sivajee himself?

But how to contrive the tiffin for which we were all languishing became now a serious subject of debate. Neither a table nor chair, had ever yet been seen in this aerial abode, and one and all of the party respectfully declined availing themselves of Sivajee's cushions. However, there is no such sharp contriver in the world as hunger, and every one's faculties becoming wonderfully brightened at the sight of our attendants busily engaged in unpacking the hampers of cold fowls and tongues, we set to work in good earnest to arrange our primitive board. This we speedily accomplished

42448

much to our own satisfaction, and with considerable effect, by tracing on the bare ground the figure of an imposing looking star, the centre of which received the various dishes, ranged with geometrical nicety; whilst the diverging rays were formed of symetrically placed shawls and cloaks, upon each of which, a fair form reclined at full length, supporting herself, as in olden Roman times, upon the elbow. Thus amidst much merriment at our awkward efforts to carve under these circumstances, we all contrived to make a hearty meal, and speedily set forth upon an exploring walk round the ramparts.

These are of considerable extent, built upon the mountain's brow, and in many parts appearing to form a continuation of the perpendicular precipices upon which they stand. In one spot this appearance is more especially obvious; the cliff projects so suddenly beyond the mountains beneath, as to give an uninterrupted fall of some thousand feet; and it is affirmed by the natives, that after Sivajee's death, this point was used by his less scrupulous successors as a place of execution for

all prisoners of war confined in the fort, who were hurled headlong from this terrific height, whilst unsuspiciously taking the air on the ramparts.

Some plausibility is attached to the story, from the formation of the wall in this identical spot, where an opening has been purposely made sufficiently large to admit of a man standing upright to inspect the unequalled prospect around; and whence a very slight push from his attendant guard might easily seal his doom. Indeed it is reported to have been rather a famous pastime of the gallant Sivajee, to disencumber himself occasionally of a superfluous wife or two, by summarily pitching her through the cunningly devised aperture; but we must not be too hard upon the poor man, for thus innocently amusing himself in times of peace.

"Because *he'd* nothing else to do."

By the time the long walk round the ramparts had been effected, and the fortress completely explored, we were warned by the declining sun to prepare for our departure;

and having accomplished the perils of the descent, we reached Malcolm Peth in perfect safety, with a full impression that a more agreeable and interesting excursion cannot be offered to the visitors of the hills, than a pic-nic party to Purtabghur.

A very remarkable spot called Paunch Gunny, situated about eight miles from the church, is another object for a day's expedition. It has lately been the subject of much discussion, with reference to the feasibility of converting it into a permanent sanitary station for sick troops, &c., as from the peculiarity of its formation and position, the amount of rain is so trifling, as to render the place perfectly habitable during the monsoon. Paunch Gunny stands on a piece of table-land, so closely surrounded by hills, as to give it the appearance of a basin, from which all moisture is attracted by the encircling heights. A small bungalow was erected here some years ago, for the accommodation of an American missionary during the rains, when his station at Malcolm Peth became uninhabitable. Here, this good man, assisted by his excellent wife,

long laboured, but not in vain; and here, too, he finally found his resting place. The aged widow still survives, employing "life's last glimmer" in self-denying exertions for the benefit of her fellow creatures. Content to live, yet ready to depart, this true Christian is a touching example to all around her; and even the most thoughtless of the gay visitants to the hills, bends with respect and reverence, as the venerable Mrs. Graves approaches.

Mahabuleshwur is only thirty miles distance from Sattara, which, since the death of the late Rajah, has become a regular annexion to the British territory, yielding to Government not only a large increase of revenue, but the great advantage of a healthy and agreeable station for the regiments, as well as for the civilians, who are fortunate enough to obtain appointments in this new collectorate. The road leading to the top of the Sattara Ghát is remarkably pretty, and much frequented for the evening drives and rides, notwithstanding its steepness. Many bridle paths branch off on either side, tempting both pedestrians and equestrians to explore them in search of the

ever-varying points of interest which abound in all directions.* One path especially worthy of remark strikes off on the left of the main road, and conducts through tangled and broken ways, to a full view of a beautiful waterfall, rushing down a wall-like rock almost uninterruptedly, in a fall of nearly six hundred feet; when swollen by the rains, it becomes a perfect cataract, precipitating itself with so much violence over the crag, that the noise caused by the foaming waters is heard at a considerable distance, and resembles one continued peal of rolling thunder.

Many sources of enjoyment present themselves to the Bombay visitor, which charm doubly from their novelty, and greatly contribute to render his stay at the hills delightful. We allude to the increased spirit of sociability, and the decreased spirit of stiff etiquette and display, which here universally prevails. As if by common consent, all the formalities of society, so rigorously practised

* This path has lately been widened into an excellent carriage-road.

at the Presidency, are banished. No one dreams of bringing either fine furniture, or showy table appointments to a place where the stay is inevitably limited; and all being equally on a rough scale, or in "camp fashion," as it is termed, the little unostentatious dinner, and even tea parties go briskly round, bringing the good folks together on a footing of intimacy which might never be attained in Bombay.

We recollect once witnessing a scene, which certainly could not occur at the Presidency, under the present existing forms of etiquette, and which, though strictly speaking, not altogether "à propos" of the subject under discussion, we yet venture to introduce, from a grateful recollection of the hearty amusement it afforded us. Well then, once upon a time (to commence in approved story-telling style), it so fell out, that we were on a visit in a most agreeable family residing temporarily at Mahabuleshwur, and comprising besides the host and hostess a young lady recently arrived from England, consequently in all the flutter of her début in the Indian world. Now although, as we before remarked, every one's

position, and even family circumstances, are usually well understood in this country, yet it does sometimes happen that a sanitary station like Mahabuleshwur is honoured by the presence of officers from the sister Presidencies of Bengal and Madras; or occasionally some perplexity may arise by a visitor making his appearance, whose card proclaims him the possessor not only of a rather common-place name, but of the very common-place title of Captain. Just such a case occurred upon the occasion to which we allude. A card was presented to the lady of the house, bearing the address, "Captain Smith, —— Regiment," and a stranger made his bow, with exterior so pleasing, and manners so fascinating, that the chord of sympathy was touched between the parties; and they were speedily on the happiest footing, engaged in that genial flow of conversation which naturally results from the contact of good breeding, refinement, and intelligence.

After an unusually long visit, Captain Smith reluctantly rose to depart; and then it was, that inspired, as we suppose, by the air of

Mahabuleshwur, the host (Mr. G——) actually committed the daring solecism, of inviting a stranger to join the family circle that evening at dinner, before even his visit had been returned! We need searcely say that the reply was a gratified assent.

The door had scarcely closed, when Mrs. G—— exclaimed to her husband:

"Well, my love! without any exception, that is the most delightful man I ever met in India! Did you observe his glances of admiration towards our dear girl?"

Then followed a grave discussion upon the question of his identity with one Captain Smith, who was reported to be a rich bachelor, ergo undeniably eligible: or another, notoriously a married man, with an incalculable amount of children: or a couple of Madras Captain Smiths, of whom nothing at all was known: or half a dozen Captain Smiths, bachelors to be sure, but not worthy of mention, possessing nothing but their laced jackets to settle upon a wife.

The arrival of other visitors interrupted the conversation; and various engagements

succeeding, the important point remained undecided at the hour of dinner, when the eagerly expected guest again appeared.

Matters went on most swimmingly. The ball of conversation was kept up with unflagging spirit; now bounding and rebounding in the hands of the lively hostess; anon, propelled with deliberative aim by the grave, but well informed host; occasionally receiving a gentle impetus as it glanced past the modest débutante; but always revolving with double rapidity and brilliancy, when caught up and circulated by the animated guest.

This was all unaffected enjoyment; but a chance observation suddenly called our hostess to order, by reminding her of the morning's perplexity, and with exquisite tact she threw out a feeler by enquiring:

"How had Captain Smith passed the last cold season?"

"Oh!" he replied, "in the most delightful sporting excursion, in company with four or five pleasant fellows, as idle as myself."

"It's all right," soliloquised Mrs. G——, "he is a bachelor."

A few more skilfully put questions elicited the information, that money was no object to this favoured individual "Then he is the Captain Smith, and no mistake," she continued in momentarily increasing elation. But as the night wore on, and his evident admiration of the young lady became more and more conspicuous, the spirits of the fair hostess rose to absolute exuberance, and seizing her delighted visitor's hand she shook it cordially, exclaiming:

"Captain Smith, we already look upon you quite in the light of an old friend; and insist that you will make our house your home, during your stay at the hills."

"Oh!" replied the grateful man, as he made his parting bow, "what would I not have given for such friends on my last visit to this place, when I could procure no other shelter than a miserable unfurnished bungalow for my poor sick wife, and three young children!"

As the door closed, Mrs. G—— fell upon her sofa, faintly repeating "sick wife, and three young children!" but speedily recovering herself, she sprang up with indignant energy, and

thus emphatically addressed her husband, whilst natural fun struggled powerfully to gain the mastery over mortification and disappointment.

"I will trouble you, Mr. G——, when next you invite a total stranger to your house, to ascertain beforehand whether he is, or is not a married man, and never again impose a doubtful person upon me."

But May is drawing towards its close. The clouds are fast gathering, and occasional showers falling refresh the air with their coolness, and relieve us from the red dust, which has lately become a serious nuisance. Hark! the distant voice of the booming thunder is rising from amid the mighty hills, now rapidly donning the purple vestments of the storm. The lightnings flash brightly around us; and Nature, arming herself with awful terrors, frowns majestically as she warns us to bid adieu to Mahabuleshwur.

CHAPTER VII.

RETURN TO BOMBAY—EXHAUSTION CAUSED BY THE CLIMATE—PANWELL—CHOWK—KHANDALLA—THE ELEPHANT HILL—CLIFFS AND RAVINE—BOTANICAL RESEARCHES—THE DUKE'S NOSE—PANDEMONIUM POINT.

CHAPTER VII.

It is usual in returning to Bombay at this season of the year to take the route viâ Nagotana, which, though involving a longer land journey, does away with the risk and uncertainty of the voyage up the coast, at a period when tempestuous weather is generally sure to be encountered. Nagotana is distant seventy miles from Mahabuleshwur, and is situated upon a river, which joins the harbour about thirty-seven miles south-east from Bombay, so that the little run across is commonly performed in one tide; and certainly to us without monotony or a suspicion of "ennui,"

from the constant change of scenery which every turn presented to one's notice, keeping us in one continued paroxysm of sketching and admiration during the short time we were in the boat. But we must honestly confess this amiable frame of mind did not last above an hour after landing at Bombay. The climate appeared to us totally unendurable, after the perfect one we had just quitted; the oppressive heat, and closeness of the atmosphere, unrelieved by a single breath of air, weighed heavily upon our spirits, and served to remind us with double bitterness of the pure mountain-breezes we had inhaled so lately at Mahabuleshwur; and from the depths of our melancholy hearts we echoed the pathetic exclamation of Dante.

"Nessun maggior dolore
Che recordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria."

Misery, indeed, it was, not only from the force of contrast to our party; for, apparently, every creature in Bombay was similarly affected by a strange torpor of the bodily and mental faculties, causing them to move about in a half

awake state of existence, and as a lady of our acquaintance would have well expressed herself, "making one feel literally fit for nothing." A few sickly attempts at dinner-parties were going on, but it is impossible to conceive anything more ludicrously forlorn than the pallid faces of both hosts and guests exhibited upon these occasions. Though struggling convulsively to repress the yawns of weariness and languor, every one was haunted by the same insane notion that something was expected of him in the way of conversation, whilst the mind was totally incapable of forming two connected ideas; and even the recognised "beaux esprits" of society, trembling for their laurels, were obliged to succumb to the leaden influence of the weather, and lapse into the universal dreamless silence.

This was truly a desperate state of affairs. Visions of despair, melancholy madness, and such like agreeable anticipations were fast stealing over us; when we were suddenly aroused into life and hope by the two-fold delight imparted by a shower of rain, and an invitation to join a party in an excursion to

Khandalla and Poona. The latter was a temptation impossible to resist, and again the bunder-boat was in requisition for a trip across the harbour to Panwell, which (fortunately for our craving desire of novelty) lies in a different direction from that so lately taken, being situated to the north-east of Bombay, from which it is distant about twenty-one miles.

We passed tolerably near to the pretty Island of Elephanta, so celebrated for its cave temples, enjoyed a pleasant sail up the river, and finally landed at Panwell within three hours of our departure from Bombay. This town is one of considerable size and commercial importance, although it stands in the midst of a salt morass, which certainly cannot add to the salubrity of the place; and in effect both fever and cholera are known to be so prevalent, that the shortest halt possible is desirable for travellers and troops proceeding to and from the Deccan, viâ Panwell. Fortunately, the temptation is not overpowering, for according to a modern author, this place is the very emporium of "dust, dogs, and donkeys."

The communication between Bombay and Poona is now so great, that it gives full support to a number of those useful public conveyances, styled mail-phaetons, which, though not very stylish or luxurious in build, contrive to accommodate three or four passengers with tolerable comfort and safety, progressing at the rate of six miles an hour over a beautiful line of country, well furnished with bungalows at every stage, where a change of horses takes place.

We found two of these vehicles, previously engaged, awaiting the arrival of our party to convey us from Panwell to Campoolie, at the foot of the Khandalla Ghâts, a distance of about twenty-four miles; and speedily ensconcing ourselves therein, we proceeded merrily, with no more exciting incident occurring than the positive refusal of one pair of horses to start, and the determined objection of another pair to stop. The first difficulty was overcome in a most primitive fashion, which, notwithstanding the kicking and plunging of the animals, set us all into roars of laughter. A strong rope was passed round

the fore-legs of each horse, and vigorously tugged by three or four men, a similar number employing themselves in turning the wheels, until, by dint of sheer strength, the obstinate brutes were dragged and pushed forward for a few yards; when, apparently, not caring to encounter this mode of treatment a second time, they trotted on very satisfactorily to the end of their stage. As to the other pair, they took the law into their own hands from the very beginning, knocking down one of the ghora wallas in their eagerness to be off, and never relaxing in a furious gallop up and down hill, until they reached their usual halting-place at Chowk, where, greatly to our amazement, we found ourselves safely deposited in a neat bungalow a full half-hour sooner than we had calculated upon.

Chowk is a large native town, situated about half way between Panwell and Campoolie. It is chiefly worthy of notice from the remarkable hill, which rises immediately behind the travellers' bungalow, strongly resembling a child's cradle in form, and indeed universally known as the Cradle Hill of Chowk. From this

place, the line of Ghât separating the Concan from the Deccan, assumes the most varied and fantastic appearance; sometimes rising in a richly-wooded mount, down whose sides numerous rivulets are streaming, bearing fertility to the cultivated fields beneath, and occasionally starting up into a lofty cliff, which churlishly repels from its stoney and barren surface, even the faintest approach of vegetation. The road is rendered doubly interesting from the number of tanks, or small lakes, which skirt it in every direction, thickly covered with the beautiful water-lily, and vividly reminding us of the Persian poet's truthful desription of the face of Nature in preparation for the monsoon.

"The clouds were all filled with the coming showers,
And the lake's expanse by the lotus flowers."

At Campoolie we finally dispensed with the phaetons, and prepared to ascend the Ghâts as the taste of each individual dictated; some in palanquins, some on horseback, and some on foot, having first bestowed a few minutes to the inspection of a pretty Hindoo temple and

sacred tank, situated picturesquely a little above the village.

Khandalla stands on the summit of the Bhore Ghát, and is approached by an excellent winding road perfectly accessible to horses and bullock-carts, which are perpetually ascending and descending for the conveyance of merchandise and baggage, up the country, and bales of cotton, grain, and other inland products, to supply the markets of Bombay, intended for exportation.

The ascent of the Ghát occupies only an hour and a half; and upon reaching our destination, we were all simultaneously struck with the same impression, that the scenery of Mahabuleshwur and Khandalla, each perfect in its kind, would not admit of comparison. In the former, a spirit of grandeur and vastness predominates; whilst a spirit of softness and loveliness pervades the latter. The climate was delicious, the clouds, atttracted and arrested in their progress towards the Concan by the hill-tops, lightened themselves by falling in frequent showers, sufficient to refresh the air, and effect an almost miraculous renovation of

Printed by Hullmandel & Walton.

ELEPHANT HILL & TRAVELLER'S BUNGALOW,

KHANDALLA.

London. Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, 1852.

our exhausted minds and bodies; and sleep, so vainly courted during the heated nights of the last few weeks, again vouchsafed to exercise his healing influence; and after a delightful night's rest, we all arose ready and willing for adventure and enterprise.

The travellers' bungalow is a neat and comfortable building, conveniently placed on the only piece of level ground to be seen at Khandalla, and which also comprises a very respectable-looking bazaar. Directly opposite the bungalow stands the Elephant Hill, so named from its supposed resemblance to that animal; and in truth we must admit, that with a slight effort of the imagination it is perceptible, especially as regards the trunk and hind-quarters, in the deep-rounded furrows, formed by the sweeping of the waters down the hill-side.

The table-land upon which Khandalla is situated, rises to an elevation of one thousand five hundred feet above the level of the sea, but the highest point of the Elephant Hill, standing five hundred feet higher, we were enabled upon reaching "the forehead" to command a most

beautiful panoramic view of land and sea, from a height of two thousand feet. But it is far easier to talk of reaching "the forehead" than to effect it; though an excellent bridle-road has been cut, winding in a serpentine form up the steep acclivity. The pedestrian portion of the party had considerable difficulty in keeping their footing, whilst the equestrians were more than once compelled to alight, and lead their horses up the severe ascent. On the very summit of this forehead is a small patch of ground, distinguished by the euphonious name of the Region of Fern, from its being the only spot on this range of Ghát sufficiently elevated to suit the hardy constitutions of this "alien to a tropic clime."

Great taste has been displayed throughout Khandalla, in the formation of numerous bridle paths, affording an easy means of access to an endless variety of remarkable points in the scenery; and for this we are mainly indebted to the indefatigable exertions of Colonel D——, late Chief Engineer, who spared neither time nor money, to render this beautiful spot as attractive to others, as for

Printed by Baldwin, Cradock & Walton.

THE DUKE'S FOOL.

many years, it was to himself. Though he has departed from among us, his pretty bungalow remains on its well-selected site, a standing memento of the unbounded hospitality which once reigned within its walls; for it rendered the accommodation of an hotel, a mere nominal advantage to those who were so fortunate as to visit Khandalla during the annual residence of the Colonel and his family.

The view from the balcony of this bungalow is of a very singular character; looking down upon a deep ravine, apparently formed by the rending asunder, in some convulsion of nature, of two magnificent cliffs, which, nearly equal in height, stand gravely surveying each other across the chasm which divides them. On the summit of the right-hand rock, formerly stood a small bungalow erected by Mr. Elphinstone, the immediate predecessor of Sir John Malcolm as Governor of Bombay; and though all symptoms of a dwelling have vanished, the place is still one of favourite resort, from its vicinity to a noble cataract, which dashes, in four separate falls, down a descent of twelve hundred feet.

There is a curious battlemented appearance in the formation of the hills which surround this ravine; some of them indeed, bear so striking a resemblance to the round towers of a fortress, that they are frequently mistaken for such, when seen for the first time from a distance, and add considerably to the general effect of the landscape. This beautiful ravine is now become a rich field for the researches of the botanist, who in the present day, may, in perfect security, prosecute his peaceful pursuit, where formerly no foot but that of the tiger ever dared to penetrate. We found here some interesting specimens of a large India-rubber creeper, (Gnetum scandens) with its fruit resembling bunches of grapes; a smaller creeper (Cepampleus convolvulacea) with similar clustering fruit. A beautiful lilac flower of the orchis tribe, called Acrides præmorsum; and the curious wood-apple (Feronia elephastum), with another larger fruit much like it, called Carega arborea.

The ground is thickly spangled, at this time of the year, with the bright-looking Curculigo graminifolia, occasionally varied by

the tall Curcuma globba, or arrow-root plant. A very delicious wild fruit called the Corinda grows in abundance at Khandalla, closely resembling the sloe of England in appearance, though far more rich and luscious in taste. It forms an excellent preserve. The small shrub-like trees, with their polished green foliage, abounding in every direction, serve strongly to remind us of the evergreen plantations at home. These trees become at night one mass of illumination, from the myriads of fire-flies which cover them, brightly and simultaneously flashing their radiant wings, as if by word of command. These little insects produce an effect perfectly indescribable, as surveyed from the verandah of Colonel D——'s house, rendering the prospect nearly as interesting by night, as it is by day.

But the most conspicuous point in the scenery of Khandalla, is decidedly the remarkably shaped cliff, known by the name of the Duke's Nose, from its supposed resemblance to that well known feature in the face of the Duke of Wellington; and indeed, as seen from some points of view,

the similitude to an entire human countenance is absolutely startling, as it appears turned upwards, with a steady gaze fixed upon the sky, the outline being sharply defined against the heavy clouds gathering in the back-ground. To an imaginative mind it would seem as if nature, intent upon perpetuating the memory of a hero, in that land where his early laurels were culled, and laughing to scorn the puny efforts of mortal artists, had spread for her canvass the imperishable rock, and with the pencil of immortality had traced in ineffaceable characters, the stern and majestic lineaments of a Wellington.

Although, as we have before remarked, the general effect of the scenery of Khandalla is more lovely than grand, more softened than imposing; yet, one spot exists, which may be said almost to rival Mahabuleshwur in its wild and terrific beauty, and which has been, not inaptly named Pandemonium Point. As the spectator stands on the furthermost ledge which projects over the rock, he might easily fancy himself the sole dweller in some unknown

region; no vestige of human habitation is to be discovered, and the mind loses itself as the eye wanders over the dark unfathomable depths of the abyss beneath.

It is the grandest study for an artist. No description can do justice to the effect produced by the gradual developement of colour, from the intense purple of the lowest depths, softening upwards through every modification of shadow, until reaching the summit, it suddenly bursts forth into a glorious flood of golden sun-light. The imagination becomes exalted; and the heart oppressed with the sublimity of the scene, turns, with nature's own impulse, to relieve its overpowering emotions by prayer. "Oh, Thou! who has created this world of beauty, teach us whilst enjoying its loveliness, to adore the hand which has formed it!"

CHAPTER VIII.

VILLAGE AND BUNGALOW AT KARLI—CAVE TEMPLES—DESCRIPTION OF LARGER CAVERN—IMPORTUNITY AND NUMBER OF MENDICANTS—FUQUEERS—A BOMBAY FUQUEER—GOSAEEN—HINDOO BELIEF IN THE TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS—MYTHOLOGY.

CHAPTER VIII.

So much did we all enjoy the pre-arranged sojourn of a fortnight at Khandalla, that at its termination, we continued to linger on, day after day, notwithstanding the darkening clouds and increased frequency of the showers, gave due notice that a heavy fall of rain was at hand. Being desirous of visiting the celebrated caves of Karli, "en route" to Poona, we at length hurried off, so as to be enabled to accomplish this expedition, before the state of the weather might render it impracticable.

A pretty ride of seven miles brought us

to the village of Karli, where we were delighted to find a comfortable bungalow, civil mess-man, and a tolerable breakfast ready to greet our arrival; to say nothing of the cheerful look out from the raised verandah, upon a handsome pagoda, and a large tank surrounded by mango trees, and backed in the distance by the line of hills, amongst which the caves are situated. These excavations are rather difficult of access: the only means of approach being a steep rugged path cut in the hill side, without much regard to the safety or comfort of the devotees frequenting the temples, by whom it is considered a highly meritorious act, to perform a certain number of these laborious ascents during the day, and which never fail to obtain for them a reputation for great sanctity.

About three hundred and thirty feet from the base of the hill, we came upon a platform cut from the rock, and leading to the grand entrance of the principal temple, which is truly a magnificent excavation, of massive and gigantic proportions, still in admirable preservation, though exhibiting symptoms of

the levelling devastation of time. No authentic accounts have yet been obtained relative to the precise period of its construction; but the researches of learned men within the last twenty years, have satisfactorily proved, that these cave temples existed upwards of one thousand years ago, and were dedicated to the worship of Bhood, one of the Hindoo deities, whose image now conspicuously adorns the interior.

However, there are many discrepancies which strike the eye, as being indicative of modern innovation. Amongst these is a compact looking little building, standing on the right side of the noble archway which surrounds, but does not form the entrance to the large temple, and is dedicated to the worship of the goddess Bhowannee, the sanguinary deity of the Thugs, whose name has been long rendered familiar to the English reader, thanks to the valuable and entertaining publications of Colonel Sleeman and Captain Meadows Taylor. An image of this horrible looking idol, stands in a dark recess of the temple, and is exhibited occasionally by the attendant Brahmins, illuminated

by flashes of some blue lights, which give so ghastly an appearance to the entire den, that one is glad to escape as quickly as possible into the open air.

Upon the left side of the archway stands a handsome column nearly thirty feet in height, bearing on its summit the figures of three lions, now fast crumbling into decay; and it is rationally supposed that a similar pillar once occupied the spot on the opposite side, where now the temple of Bhowannee intrudes its uncongenial architecture, a perfect caricature on the antiquities which surround it. A miserable little doorway under the handsome arch, is the only entrance to the interior of the grand cave; it is truly a splendid excavation with its roof ribbed and pointed in gothic style, supported by a double row of pillars, each surmounted by a colossal elephant bearing on its trunk a male and female figure.

But so great was the gloom of this vast cavern, that we were obliged to have recourse to torches, before a single object could be discerned, and truly the effect then produced was of the most imposing character, as the

fitful light brought suddenly to view, the long perspective line of pillars, terminating in a circular stone altar, surmounted by a curious description of canopy, something like an umbrella in shape. We now discovered, that the imposing looking gothic roof which had so greatly excited our admiration at first sight, from the supposition that it was carved out of the solid rock, was in reality nothing more than a frame of ribbed wood work, so blackened by time that it might well be mistaken for stone in the imperfect light of the cavern. It is in capital preservation notwithstanding its almost incredible age, which the Brahmins assert to be nearly nine hundred years; having been added only in the second century, subsequent to the first formation of these temples. It is said to be teak-wood, which is now proved by experience to be the most durable of all timber; and although to English ideas of taste and congruity, this paltry addition of wood work greatly mars the general effect produced by these vast excavations, yet doubtless at the period of its erection, the costliness of the material, and the difficulty with which

it was procured, excited only feelings of admiration for the munificence of the prince who bestowed it.

These temples are literally infested with Brahmins, Fukeers, and ascetics of every description; who, though professedly abjuring all save the barest necessities of life, we found to be as clamorous and importunate for money, as ever was the most accomplished horde of Irish beggars. They swarmed under our feet wherever we turned; sometimes crawling like reptiles on the ground, exhibiting every species of either natural or assumed deformity, to excite our compassion; sometimes boldly threatening us with the vengeance of their gods, if we refused to comply with their demands; and occasionally one more facetious than his fellows, would utter a humorous oration fraught with all the skilful flattery of which the Mahratta tongue is so capable. One of the gentlemen of our party was fortunately familiar with the language, and readily interpreted these several addresses, entering into the spirit of the joke, and catching with admirable fidelity, the very tone in which they

were uttered. But in proportion to the amusement we evinced, rose the demands upon our purses, and the increased rate of their expectations. Our facetious friend, who terminated his first speech by humbly soliciting a single rupee, had no sooner received it, and marked the good humour which his eloquence excited, than he gravely wheeled round, and with the most consummate impudence demanded five rupees more. Speaking in a slow and emphatic manner, he entreated our pardon for the great mistake he had committed, in supposing us at first sight to be merely very burra sahibs, but now he plainly saw, we were great rajahs, who could never think of offering him less than ten rupees! Here our shouts of laughter interrupted the fellow's modest demands, which would no doubt have speedily reached one hundred rupees, had we not obliged him summarily to decamp, by significant gestures indicative of a roll down the hill.

Before quitting the large cave, we took the trouble to measure its dimensions, and found the length was nearly one hundred and twenty-

seven feet, and the width forty-six feet; an extent far less than we had supposed, owing to the deceptive gloom throwing the objects into such apparent distance, as to render them scarcely discernible. The smaller cave is situated higher up the rock, and can only be approached by roughly hewn steps, which really require considerable exertions to climb even in dry weather, but they become dangerous and almost impracticable in the rainy season, forming a regular water course, down which the mountain torrents descend.

At the period of our visit (the end of June) we found it by no means an easy matter to reach this temple; nor indeed, did the sight of it repay us for all the labour we had expended in clambering the broken and slippery steps. The interior of the cave is in so rough and unfinished a state as to give the idea either of having been abandoned, before the completion could be accomplished, or of having suffered from the effects of damp, which had told more heavily here than in the larger cavern. Even so early

in the season, we found some places more than a foot deep in water, and we heard from the villagers, that during the height of the monsoon, the cave is so completely filled as to resemble an enclosed tank, and is consequently never approached even by the most adventurous traveller, or self-denying devotee. Of the latter class, the most disgusting specimens are decidedly the Fuqueers; they abound all over India, imposing upon the credulity of the people, by their pretended sanctity and mortification of life, thus contriving to obtain an easy maintenance, and the enjoyment of total exemption from labour, which constitutes in the estimation of Orientals, the "summum bonum" of human bliss.

The word fuqueer, properly speaking, applies only to beggars of the Mahommedan religion; but the English have so long been in the habit of thus designating the devotees of every caste among the Hindoos, as well as the followers of the Prophet, that this distinction is now almost forgotten. These wretches render themselves doubly revolting

in appearance, by their custom of smearing over the face, and often the entire body, with white ashes; allowing the finger nails to grow untouched, until they become perfect talons, curling round, and forming a hollow tube, like the horns of an animal; and frequently by displaying a leg or arm divested of all vitality, by voluntarily and forcibly retaining it in one position, until the muscles become fixed, the whole limb withers away, and is immovable for life.

A horrible specimen of these penance-performing Fuqueers was, until very lately, to be seen in one of the bazaars of Bombay. He sat in one fixed attitude night and day, his left arm wasted and shapeless as that of a mummy, supporting a flower-pot, which for so many years had rested upon the skeleton hand, that no effort short of a fracture of the limb could remove it. It is difficult to understand how life could be supported for a number of years under these hideous circumstances; but still more astonishing is the existence of an amount of fanaticism which could inspire, or of credulity which could

applaud such unnatural suffering. A devotee of this description among the Hindoos is denominated a Gosaeen. He is bound by solemn vows never to shave, cut either hair or nails, or allow a free exercise to any limb; and by rigid perseverance in this life of self-denial, he is supposed to attain a degree of sanctity and purification in this world, which will entitle him to a perfection of happiness hereafter.

With the exception of one or two subordinate sects, all Hindoos are believers in the doctrine of metempsychosis, with a firm conviction that in proportion to the self-imposed suffering and privations of this state of being, will be the exaltation of the soul in its next transmigration; until it finally reaches that stage of perfection necessary for its re-union with the divine spirit which pervades the universe, and from whom the soul of every human being emanates.

It is a deeply interesting subject for contemplation, that even amongst the most savage and unenlightened nations of the world, not only is a belief in the existence of one

Supreme Being universal, but also an innate sense of some atoning suffering being requisite to purify and reconcile the erring soul to its maker. However clouded by ignorance, and debased by prejudice, this germ of truth lies hidden in every heart; mercifully implanted to prepare it for an acknowledgment of the one Saviour and Mediator, and the all-sufficiency of His death and sufferings for the sins of fallen mankind.

The progress of Christianity in India would be more rapid, did the Hindoo religion stop short at the belief in one Divine Spirit superintending and pervading the universe. So far all is well; but from this point begins their outrageously monstrous mythology. They pretend that from the "first great cause" sprung the principal deities of their worship, viz., Brahma, the creator; Vishnoo, the preserver; and Siva, or Mahdeo, the destroyer.

The various incarnations ascribed to these gods are beyond calculation; by the Brahmins they are asserted to amount to three hundred and thirty millions, and sepa-

rate worship is rendered to each of these mortal appearances (or Outars, as they are styled), in temples expressly devoted to the purpose.

The two distinct classes of the Deos, or good spirits, and the Dyts, or evil spirits are the offspring of Brahma, the creator, and by him permitted to carry on a perpetual struggle for pre-eminent influence over the minds of mankind. But amidst all the corruptions and glaring absurdities of the Hindoo religion, there are strange glimpses of truth occasionally to be discerned; for instance, although according to his creed, Brahma thus suffers the powers of evil to be exerted upon the creatures of his own creation, he is, nevertheless, supposed to give heed to entreaties for support against their assaults; and forthwith despatches a Deos of superior power to rescue the fervent suppliant, by overwhelming and confounding the evil spirit who has assailed him. Here again, though obscured and polluted by the errors of ages, is a striking analogy to the Christian's belief, and the Christian's feeling, when

in the words of his Lord he prays—"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."*

* We refer our readers to the admirable works of Sir William Jones and Major Grant Duff, for clear and sufficient notices of the Hindoo mythology.

CHAPTER IX.

DEPARTURE FROM KARLI — ARRIVAL AT POONA — PEISHWHA'S PALACE—THE CITY AND THE CAMP—THE SUNGUM—KIRKEE—THE BATTLE OF KIRKEE—DAPOORIE—CLIMATE—HOUSES, &C. — ROADS — CHURCH — CITY OF POONA — GAOL—HILL AND TEMPLE OF PARHUTTEE.

CHAPTER IX.

By the 1st of July the rains had set in steadily, pouring down in such unremitting torrents, that one and all of our party began to consider that a comfortable house and cheerful society in Poona, might be rather more enlivening under present circumstances, than exploring damp caves, or sitting despondingly watching the fast-filling tank from the windows of the bungalow. On our arrival at Karli, it had been unanimously decided that a week at least could be pleasantly spent in inspecting the temples, and rambling over the hills; and for two days we bore up wonderfully well,

all things considered, but on the third morning, matters began to look gloomy. The breakfast-table exhibited a circle of long faces, which visibly lengthened every hour, and towards tiffin time reached so serious a degree of elongation, that there was no concealing the fact we were all heartily tired of Karli, and each other's dulness; and we therefore speedily came to the conclusion to summon the phaeton, and be off.

And now that with brightening spirits we were fairly on the move, and began once more to feel amiably disposed towards each other, we laughed heartily at the species of spell which seemed to have bound us to the damp and dulness of Karli, and which it only depended upon our own pleasure to break.

Now, like liberated captives, we enjoyed everything; not even the rain was heeded, though it continued to pour down mercilessly during the five hours' drive into Poona; nor could we conscientiously admit that the face of the country was of a particularly interesting character, or the line of road in any way com-

parable with that we had lately traversed between Panwell and Khandalla. But the fact was, we were determined to be pleased, and, jogged on in high good humour, all going smoothly until within seven or eight miles of our destination, when one of the wheels suddenly flew off, and down came the phaeton with a jerk that precipitated us all comfortably into the mud. The driver, who appeared tolerably accustomed to such occurrences, took the matter very composedly, and with the help of a piece of rope contrived to patch up the crazy-looking vehicle much to his own satisfaction, assuring us that "all was right, and we had nothing more to fear." We must confess, that we resumed our seats in rather a sobered state of spirits, holding on to the sides like grim death, and cautiously eyeing every bad bit of road, as we approached it, with a sort of desperate reference to the position we might possibly take up on it. But we rattled on, down the steep hills, over the two bridges, and right into Poona with perfect safety, not sorry to find ourselves at ten o'clock at night comfortably installed in a pretty house in the Horse

Artillery lines, which had previously been prepared for our reception.

Poona ranks as the largest and most important of the out stations belonging to the Bombay Presidency. It is now the capital of the modern province of the Deccan, as it was until A.D. 1818 of the great Mahratta empire, and the residence of the Peishwa or governor, whose palace is still to be seen standing in a well selected situation upon an eminence in the centre of the city in an open space, surrounded by streets and houses, reminding one rather forcibly of the market-place in a country town in England. The main building is approached by a handsome gateway, with high towers overlooking the entire city and cantonment of Poona; but the palace itself no longer the abode of powerful princes, is truly fallen from its high estate, the principal apartments having been converted into offices appropriated for the use of the engineer, and other government officers, during the rains. "Sic transit gloria mundi."

Poona may be now said to consist of two grand divisions, the City and the Camp; the

former enclosed within high walls, and entered by strongly fortified gates, is inhabited exclusively by the natives. The latter comprises the regimental and civil lines, and the numerous private dwellings of the English residents and visitors, the English and Scotch churches, masonic lodge, a good esplanade, and excellent roads intersecting each other, like streets in a town.

The houses are, with few exceptions, thatched bungalows, standing separately, surrounded by pretty gardens enclosed by hedges formed of the prickly pear, mingled with the bright-blossomed "golden mohur." The effect of this species of enclosure is both pleasing and rural, and certainly very superior in appearance to the damp discoloured stone-walls, which surround the houses in Bombay, and strike the eye of every stranger as being unsightly in the extreme.

Besides the two distinctive localities of the city and the camp, Poona may be said to extend about two miles beyond the limits of the latter, as far as the Sungum. This word signifies in the Mahratta language, "the

meeting of waters," and is here applied to the union of the rivers Moota and Moola, which henceforward becoming one, flows on until it empties itself into the Beema. The Sungum was formerly the British residency, and the scene of Mr. Elphinstone's laborious efforts both of diplomacy and military tactics to reduce the unruly spirit of the Mahrattas to something like order, and submission to the constituted authorities. But some years prior to that period it was visited by the Duke of Wellington, then General Sir Arthur Wellesley, during his brilliant campaign in Western India; when in the year 1803, with one of his characteristic bold and rapid movements, he advanced suddenly upon Poona, and saved it from the destruction threatened by the lawless incursions of Jeswunt Row Holkar, and his bandit followers.

Independent of the many interesting associations connected with its history, the Sungum is decidedly the most attractive spot in the neighbourhood of Poona as regards situation and scenery; or indeed, we may say, it is the only one possessing any pretensions to land-

cape beauty. The river, always a pretty object, is rendered doubly picturesque by the appearance of a handsome Hindoo pagoda upon its banks, and a neat bridge thrown across, connecting the roads leading to Kirkee and Poona.

The buildings of the Sungum consist of the court-house, the residence of the senior judge, and two or three private bungalows, none of them sufficiently conspicuous either in size or architecture to give a very exalted impression of the abodes which were formerly considered suitable for the British Ambassador and residents, though far superior to the original residency, which was burnt to the ground in 1817.

About two miles beyond the Sungum stands the village of Kirkee, memorable for being the scene of the celebrated battle fought on the 3rd November, 1817 between the British troops under General Smith, and the treacherous Peishwa Bajee Rao; ending in the total discomfiture and flight of the latter, and the final occupation of Poona by the English. A most graphic description of this engagement

is given by Major Duff in his "History of the Mahrattas," with all the force and perspicuity of expression which peculiarly distinguish his style, and bring the scene so vividly before his readers, that they almost fancy themselves

"Spectators of the fight."

This narration of the advance of the Peishwa's army, (especially his mass of cavalry) as it bore down suddenly upon our force, is so admirable, that we cannot resist the pleasure of transcribing it, for the benefit of those who have not as yet seen this valuable work. In describing the appearance of the plain surrounding Poona, as seen from a small eminence near Kirkee, he says; "A mass of cavalry covered nearly the whole extent of it; and towards the city, endless streams of horsemen were pouring from every avenue. Those only who have witnessed the Bore in the Gulf of Cambay, and have seen in perfection the approach of the roaring tide, can form the exact idea presented to the author at sight of the Peishwa's army. It was towards the afternoon of a very sultry day; there was a

dead calm, and no sound was heard except the rushing, the trampling, and neighing of the horses, and the rumbling of the gun wheels. The effect was heightened by seeing the peaceful peasantry flying from their work in the fields, the bullocks breaking from their yokes, the wild antelopes startled from sleep, bounding off, and then turning for a moment to gaze on this tremendous inundation, which swept all before it, levelled the hedges and standing corn, and completely overwhelmed every ordinary barrier as it moved."

The account of the engagement follows, given with all the spirit of a soldier, and the truthfulness of an eye-witness; and though almost too rapid and concise in detail, yet no instance of striking individual merit is overlooked, and that recorded of Colonel Burr will for ever rescue his honoured name from oblivion. This gallant officer was suffering from the effects of a stroke of paralysis, which had not only deprived him of the use of one side, but greatly impaired his mental faculties; yet he it was, who first perceived the advancing foe, and at the head

of that battalion of the 7th regiment, which he himself had "formed and led," he bravely stood the first shock of the attack, keeping his post with undiminished coolness, even when two of his attendants were shot by his side, and a ball had passed through his own hat.

The Peishwa is said to have witnessed the action from the top of Parhuttee, (the highest eminence in the immediate neighbourhood of Poona) prudently stationing a considerable force at the foot of the hill, and losing no time in effecting his escape, the moment he perceived the total discomfiture of his army.

It is not our intention to follow the progress of the British arms, through all the glorious career of the Mahratta war; but it is difficult to avoid touching slightly upon the theme whilst exploring a country, where almost every spot of ground has been bravely contested, and where thickly beneath our feet, lie the unmarked graves of many a gallant countryman.

Kirkee is now become a regular cantonment,

with commodious barracks, and comfortable houses adapted for the accommodation of one of Her Majesty's dragoon regiments always stationed there. It also possesses a small church and officiating chaplain, and is generally considered both a healthy and agreeable situation, embracing from its vicinity to Poona all the advantages of society; whilst the distance is sufficient to secure to the quietly disposed, all the privileges of retirement.

The monsoon residence of the governor of Bombay is situated at Dapoorie about three miles beyond Kirkee, rather inconveniently far for the good folks of Poona, who are expected to pay their respects in morning visits, as well as by the acceptance of invitations to dinner parties and balls. Dapoorie is full seven miles distant from Poona, and it requires a considerable portion of fascination in a host and hostess to reconcile their guests to such an expedition on a wet night, or when the thermometer stands above 88°.

The climate of Poona, as indeed throughout all the Deccan, is delightful during the monsoon, much resembling that of a fine summer

in England, with its alternations of sunshine and shower. There is a bracing and invigorating feeling in the air, doubly welcome after the relaxing heat of Bombay, which tends not only to benefit the bodily health. It so greatly revives and re-animates the spirits, that every one seems inclined to enter with considerable zest into the pleasures of society; consequently, a stream of gaiety commences with the opening of the season, not unlike the routine of amusement carried on at a watering-place at home; and the very expression of "Poona in the rains," is now significant of every species of social enjoyment. It is really a matter of difficulty to obtain a house at this time of the year; for in addition to the three or four regiments always stationed in Poona, and the numerous visitants from Bombay; all the civilians and engineers, flock in with their families, from their respective districts, too happy to exchange their tents and jungle life, for comfortable bungalows and a regular holiday-making in Poona. The best houses are frequently engaged from the previous year; but woe to the unwary man who has delayed

providing himself with a shelter before the season begins! The traveller's bungalow is the only resource for strangers, and even there, they may not remain beyond three days, should other parties arrive requiring accommodation. A good family hotel is greatly needed; and if conducted on a respectable and reasonable scale, it would doubtless be well supported, and prove a successful undertaking to the proprietors; but hitherto every attempt has been a failure, owing to the exorbitance of the charges, and the total disregard of comfort and cleanliness in the arrangement of the establishment.

The roads of Poona offer greater inducements for riding than those of Bombay, being composed of a softer substance called Morano, a kind of decomposed trap which binds firmly and closely with water, forming a smooth and agreeable surface for the horses' feet, and thus enabling them to bear with safety a greater amount of work than in Bombay, where the roads being as hard as flint, cause sad havoc amongst the poor animals.

The church at Poona is well and centrally situated, within an easy distance of the

European barracks, and with sufficient accommodation for one regiment at a time; but though seats in abundance have been provided for the soldiers, the architect does not appear to have considered it desirable that the poor "Sahib logue" portion of the community should be equally well cared for. A very shabby space is apportioned for their reception, and without an early attendance at church, there is but a small chance of obtaining a seat, even in the most distant corner of the crowded aisle. This very economical arrangement, however, has its peculiar advantages; inasmuch as it greatly tends towards filling the Scotch church which is immediately opposite; and doubtless the engineer who superintended its construction had some such object in view.

The old city of Poona is well worth visiting, not only on account of the regularity of its streets, which are all named after some Hindoo God or Goddess; but on account of the number of handsome pagodas and temples which are to be seen in every direction, elaborately carved and gilded on the exterior, but resembling the most dismal looking dog-kennels within;

so that the hideous figure of the presiding deity is scarcely discernible without the aid of a torch, which is never very graciously accorded by the officiating priests.

The goal is also situated in the centre of the city, and is perhaps one of the most creditable looking prisons in the west of India; the battlemented walls and round towers giving it all the appearance of a well-preserved fort; whilst the interior arrangements are admirably adapted for the maintenance of health and cleanliness amongst the prisoners. Various useful works are carried on here, under the superintendence of the inspecting surgeon, such as the manufacture of useful and ornamental baskets from fine bamboo, generally performed by Malay prisoners. Many ingenious arts are also practised by the industrious China-men, all greatly productive of benefit to the habits, and moral improvement of the community.

The principal lion of Poona is the celebrated hill and temple dedicated to the goddess Parhuttee, wife of Siva or Mahdeo the destroyer, and consequently an object of solemn worship amongst the Hindoos. The hill,

situated about a mile from the city, rises abruptly from the plain to a considerable elevation, giving a complete view of the surrounding country, and was therefore well selected by the Peishwa Bajee Rao, as his post of observation during the engagement at Kirkee. From this spot not a movement could take place unnoticed, and thus, upon witnessing the discomfiture of his troops, he was enabled instantaneously and effectually to secure his own escape, before it was supposed possible that the news of the engagement could have reached him. The hill is bounded on one side by a large artificial lake, in which stands a pretty well-wooded island of great reputed sanctity, and still held in high veneration by the Brahmins. The temple of the goddess Parhuttee stands on the summit of the hill; and extending nearly down one entire side, are the dwellings of the priests and other contiguous buildings, all enclosed within battlemented walls, and producing from their castellated appearance a very imposing effect when seen from a little distance.

B

Printed by Hullmandel & Walton.

The approach to the temple is by a flight of steps, so easy as to be accessible to palanquins; and even the sure-footed Deccan ponies (or tatoos as they are called) contrive to ascend and descend with perfect safety. The great image of the goddess is guarded with jealous care, and exhibited with evident reluctance by the watchful Brahmins, in consequence of repeated attempts made to abstract the costly jewels with which the idol is adorned. The eyes especially, are said to be composed of diamonds of inestimable value, but these are always cunningly removed and replaced by worthless imitations during the night, or directly a stranger is seen to approach the foot of the hill. Great adoration is paid to the goddess Parhuttee, who is supposed to exercise considerable influence over her husband, and to possess the power of averting from her worshippers, those calamities and bereavements which would otherwise fall on their devoted heads, when hurled by the hand of the terrible Siva. The temple is constructed with due regard to solidity and durability, the walls being

of sufficient thickness to admit of flights of steps and even small recesses, to be built within their depth; whilst from the ramparts or rather flat terraces above, the view of the surrounding country is so complete, as alone to form an ample inducement for an excursion to the hill of Parhuttee.

CHAPTER X.

SOCIETY IN POONA—REGIMENTAL EXPENDITURE—THEATRICAL AMUSEMENTS—FANCY BALL—HILL FORTS OF PORUNDHUR—SINGHUR AND WASSOTA—CAPTURE OF WASSOTA—SASSOOR.

CHAPTER X.

We think it was Mrs. Postans who, in one of her amusing works, so aptly designated the period of the rains in Poona, as "that season of damp, mildew, and sociability;" had she only added, "of idleness and gossipping," the description would be complete, for never yet were these accomplishments practised in greater perfection than in Poona. We do not make this assertion in any bitterness of spirit; in merely stating the notorious fact that it is so, we must admit, that under existing circumstances it could not well be otherwise.

Here are a number of people congregated together professedly for the purpose of holiday-making; the civilian is relieved from his district wanderings, the merchant from the toils and cares of business, and even the military man enjoys some relaxation from the usual routine of daily parades. The consequences are obvious, the younger officers especially having nothing on earth to do, start off directly after breakfast on a round of visits, indefatigably collecting and carrying on the news picked up at each house, until the most marvellous knowledge of everybody's affairs is obtained, and openly discussed in full conclave at "the band" in the evening. As to any little "affaire de cœur" going on unperceived, it is a moral impossibility; the strictest watch is always kept upon those houses in which there is a chance of meeting a young lady; and the mere circumstance of a visitor, upon his entrance into a drawing-room, finding a gentleman already seated there, and who presumes to outstay him, is quite sufficient for the immediate circulation of a report that Mr. A. is going to be married to Miss B.; and forth-

with such a system of espionage and quizzing commences, that in nine cases out of ten, the parties are effectually frightened into reserve and alienation, and many a promising match is thus nipped in the bud. Certain it is, that fewer marriages take place in Poona, comparatively speaking, than in the other out stations; notwithstanding the superior extent of its society, and the many facilities it affords for the formation of intimate acquaintanceship, by the daily meetings and excursions, always going on.

The bachelor civilians are always the grand aim of manœuvring mammas; for, however, young in the service they may be, their income is always vastly above that of the military man, to say nothing of the noble provision made by the fund for their widows and children. We remember being greatly amused, soon after our arrival in the country, at overhearing a lady say, in reference to her daughter's approaching marriage with a young civilian: "Certainly, I could have wished my son-in-law to be a little more steady; but then it is three hundred a year for my girl, dead or alive!"

The ball-rooms in India always present a very gay appearance, from the vast majority of red coats and handsome uniforms amongst the gentlemen. Here, the very reverse of England, a black coat is the rarity, and is held in high estimation as the distinctive mark of a civilian in full dress; consequently, few mammas object to the introduction of a stranger in plain clothes to their daughters, whilst they would look rather discouragingly at any young red-coat who presumed to make his bow.

We once witnessed with considerable glee the discomfiture of a lady of this class, on the occasion of a public ball, when, for a wonder, there was a superabundance of the fair sex present, and for a few minutes her daughter remained unasked for the approaching dance. She was beginning to look uneasy and fidgety, when one of the stewards quickly made his way to them, accompanied by a gentleman dressed in plain clothes, who was speedily introduced, and graciously received by both mamma and daughter. The dance went merrily on, and "La Madre" watched

with delight the apparently animated conversation going on between the young couple, when it suddenly occurred to her to ask of her neighbour :

" Who is that gentlemanlike-looking person dancing with Fanny ?"

" Oh ! don't you know him ?" said the friend ; " he is Mr. —— the artist, just arrived from Bombay, who takes such excellent likenesses."

The good lady started with dismay. A stranger from England since her childhood, she was totally unconscious that the exercise of the fine arts, as a profession, is not there considered incompatible with the position of a gentleman, or that the possession of talent is an universally acknowledged passport to the highest circles of society. With a face inflamed with anger, she hastily bounced from her seat, and seizing upon the unfortunate steward who had introduced the ineligible partner, she exclaimed :

" Why, Captain ——, how could you think of bringing such a person to dance with my daughter ?"

"What can you mean, Madam?" said the poor frightened-looking man; "I mentioned his name, and thought you seemed pleased with the introduction."

"You make me lose all patience," retorted the indignant lady. "Of course, from his dress, I supposed him to be a civilian;" and watching for the termination of the dance, she approached her daughter, and with a stiff bow of cool defiance to the petrified partner, she marched her off to the other side of the room.

Besides the réunions and private parties incessantly going on, there are many very gay balls given by the different regiments during the rains, and which invariably take place in the respective mess-rooms, handsomely decorated for the occasion with the regimental colours and trophies, the supper-tables always vieing with each other in the display of magnificent plate, glass, &c., belonging to each mess. These entertainments fall heavily upon the pockets of young subalterns, with whom it is generally a matter of some difficulty to steer their course free of debt, without

any additional demands upon their purses. Consequently, in those regiments most conspicuous for liberality and hospitality, it is quite a rare occurrence to meet with an unembarrassed man; and in too many instances a foundation of debt is laid in early life, which, accumulating rapidly from year to year, by the fearful interest charged upon borrowed money, reaches at length to a height of inextricable involvement, which dooms the victim to a perpetual residence in India.

The lavish expenditure bestowed upon the table equipage and mess kit in general, has lately been the subject of much and deserved animadversion. However, too many voices cannot be raised in deprecation of this fast spreading evil, equally unnecessary for the present, as it is ruinous for the future. In most of the Company's regiments, the senior officers are married men, and consequently only frequenters of the mess-table upon rare and stated occasions; others again are permanently absent upon staff appointments; and thus it often occurs, that the only "habitués" for whom this magnificent

display is prepared and so large an expenditure is incurred, consists of a few junior lieutenants and young ensigns, whose enjoyment of a good dinner might possibly survive the shock of even seeing it served in less costly array.

In corroboration of these remarks, we will mention a circumstance which came under our own observation not very long ago. We were invited by a juvenile ensign to inspect the unpacking of a very splendid dessert service just received from England, by the mess of the —th regiment; the glass centre-piece of which, alone cost seventy guineas; and upon enquiring what number of officers daily attended the mess to enjoy the sight of so much grandeur, we were answered: "Oh, most of our fellows are married men, or away upon staff appointments; there are only about five or six of us youngsters who dine here every day. But," said the youth, with an "esprit de corps" look flashing from his dark eyes, "I suppose you think we might put up with something less expensive." We must candidly admit, such a thought did occur to us; but with reference

to the fiery glance which we felt was upon us as we modestly cast down our eyes; and fortunately calling to mind that "discretion is the best part of valour," that "truth is not to be spoken at all times," and various such Sancho Panza-like aphorisms, we meekly received the inferred rebuke, and took refuge in silence.

It is all very well to laugh, but the evil is a crying one, and too serious in its nature to be overcome by mere ridicule. But we earnestly hope the day is not far distant, when the subject will be taken steadily in hand by the commanding officers of regiments, and a stop put to this excessive and unnecessary display, which is the leading cause of many a career of irretrievable involvement and consequent unhappiness. Some instances have occurred within our own knowledge, in which the junior officers of regiments, thus shackled by heavy mess expenditure, have actually not received one rupee of their pay for several months! The small surplus remaining from the inevitable items of Mess Bill, Military Fund, Library, and Band, being totally absorbed in

the extra charges for "guest nights," balls, and "contributions for new mess kit."

It is evident that a regiment, taken collectively, must suffer from this system. In a well-principled mind the horror of debt is inherent, and when even the strictest self-denial is found insufficient to avert it, can it be a matter of surprise, that the most honourably disposed amongst the young men should eagerly seek for any post which would remove them from the never-ending demands, and harassing difficulties of a regimental life. And thus it happens, that many a noble heart, whose example might diffuse a salutary influence on all around him, becomes alienated for ever from his corps, who are consequently deprived of the benefit which his talents and excellencies bestow elsewhere.

Theatrical amusements are carried on with more spirit in Poona, than in Bombay, and are mainly dependent upon the exertions of amateur officers from the different regiments, assisted by the privates, and occasionally by their wives, whose ideas as to the personification of lady-characters are, it must be confessed,

of rather a peculiar order. These parts are generally given to the smoothest faced, and most gentle spoken, among the young men, who really contrive to acquit themselves marvellously well at times; and thanks to the padding and screwing, and "crinolines" inflicted upon them by some lady friend, who undertakes to superintend the labours of the toilet, they look uncommonly like real live women, as long as they stand still. But, ye gods! only to see these representatives of feminine grace when they attempt to move! In five minutes they invariably forget the short, mincing step which has been so indefatigably practised. Nature resumes her sway, and a way they go! clearing the stage with strides against which no amount of petticoats could ever contend; and after one or two desperate efforts to disengage their hampered limbs, amidst shouts of laughter from the audience, they are fairly obliged to make their escape behind the scenes, by means of a kangaroo jump! The effect of this novel species of exit is perfectly delicious, after a languishing, sentimental love-scene has been going on for

some time, and we doubt if the most finished acting ever excited greater enjoyment (certainly not more intense merriment) than we felt, upon first witnessing such an exhibition.

But we will not withhold our meed of praise where it is due, and heartily admit, that amongst the amateur actors on the Poona boards are several whose dramatic talents are of so superior a description, that if exercised professionally they could not fail to command universal admiration and success.

The "getting up" of a theatre at an outstation, calls every one's ingenuity into requisition; all arrangements, decorations, scene-painting, mechanical contrivances, &c., must be performed by gentlemen, or at least so completely planned and superintended by them, that it amounts to the same thing. This tends to dispel much of the listlessness and indolence so frequently engendered by the climate; and as the pieces selected for representation are always of an unexceptionable nature, it appears to us that a more harmless recreation could not be devised, or one better calculated to improve both moral and mental faculties.

The grand event of a Poona campaign is a fancy ball, that is, if given by a private individual of any distinction in society, in which case it is "de rigueur" to pay the compliment of appearing in fancy costume; but every attempt to get up one by general subscription, has invariably proved a failure, owing to the disinclination evinced by the majority of ball-going folks to give themselves any extra trouble that could possibly be avoided, and the alarm experienced by the remainder, of appearing conspicuous, should they assume the fantastic garments of fancy.

During the time of our late Commander-in-chief, Sir Thomas Mac'Mahon, a handsome entertainment of this description was given every season, which never failed to set all Poona in a state of effervescence, for a full month beforehand. Such a hubbub! and such feverish anxiety exhibited to discover every body's intended character and costume; and carefully to keep one's own a dead secret! Fashion books, old numbers of "La Belle Assemblée," and the "Magasin des Dames,"

were at a premium; and those much enduring mortals, yclept private artists, were more severely victimised than even during that frightful period of suffering when the epidemic of albums and scrap books raged with such unrelenting encroachment. Despite all efforts at concealment, as the festival day approached, every dress to be worn, or character to be assumed was tolerably well ascertained throughout the camp, thanks to the exertions of those who so indefatigably set themselves to the work of discovery; and this material point settled, it became next a matter of anxious inquiry whether the velvet which composed Major C's mantle would be silk or cotton in its texture, or if the lace which ornamented Mr. D's beautiful tunic would prove to be bullion, or only paltry tinsel. Considering the manifold difficulties to be encountered in a place where materials are scarce, and Dirzees dull, the whole affair really goes off remarkably well, great taste being displayed in many of the costumes, and a general spirit of enjoyment pervading the numerous guests, who never

depart until a very late or rather early hour.

Although we have particularised rather minutely these "gay and festive scenes," let it not be supposed that in such alone consists the society of Poona. On the contrary, a large and valuable circle exists there composed of those who, finding neither pleasure nor happiness in frivolous amusements, wisely choose for themselves the better part, and though occasionally mixing with the general community, they may be said to form a distinct coterie, in which the exercises of religion, and rational conversation, are deemed more congenial and attractive pursuits than those of their gaily-disposed neighbours. And heartily do we agree with them, with the reservation, that zeal should never degenerate into fanaticism, or a spirit of intolerance be permitted to gain ground, which would deprecate too severely the innocent recreations of the young and happy, although the taste for their enjoyment may have subsided in ourselves.

As a place of permanent residence, Poona

possesses many advantages over the other out-stations of the Bombay Presidency. Amongst these may be reckoned its vicinity to the coast, which is sufficient to bring it occasionally within the influence of the sea-breezes, and the neighbouring hill forts of Singhur and Porundhur, the former situated only twelve miles, and the latter twenty miles from Poona, both on so considerable an elevation, as to afford a complete and delightful change of climate during the three months of the year in which the hot winds are prevalent throughout the Deccan.

The scenery of Porundhur is especially pretty, somewhat resembling that of Mahabuleshwur on a miniature scale, with its rugged and furrowed cliffs, crowned by a few scattered bungalows and the picturesquely disposed tents, shining like white specks in the brilliant sunlight. The fort of Singhur was surrendered to the English in A.D. 1817 by the Peishwa Bajee Rao, as a pledge for his sincerity in the ratification of a treaty just then concluded. It was speedily restored to him, but upon the discovery of his subsequent treachery, was

attacked and captured in the following year by a detachment under General Pritzler, who about the same time also subjugated the equally strong fortresses of Porundhur and Wassota. The latter place is doubly interesting, from having been the scene of the imprisonment of two young Madras officers, named Hunter and Morrison, who were attacked whilst "en route" from Hydrabad to Poona, and notwithstanding their spirited resistance were taken prisoners, and confined for five weary months in the hill fort of Wassota.

The history of the assault and surrender of this place is so admirably given by Major Grant Duff, that no other description could do equal justice to it; therefore, again we follow him, when, after relating the capture of the forts of Porundhur and Singhur, and the advance of the British troops upon Wassota, he says: "The wild country through which the troops advanced for about twenty miles far exceeded in sublimity and grandeur any pre-conceived ideas, that the British officers might have formed of those vast mountains, dells, and forests, which they were told existed

in the Ghât Mahta. The necessary artillery was transported with extraordinary labour, through thick jungles and deep valleys, where natural barriers presented themselves in every succeeding hill, at which a handful of men might have arrested a host, and when at last brought to the point of bombardment, intense interest was excited for the two officers, Cornets Hunter and Morrison, who the reader may recollect, were taken prisoners at the commencement of the war, and were now in confinement in this fortress. The wives and families of the Rajah of Sattara and his brothers were also in Wassota, and these princes were present in the British camp. The obstinacy of the Killidar, who at first would listen to no terms of surrender, was in this instance a cause of general regret. At length the mortars opened; and though the peal of every salvo as it reverberated from the surrounding rocks, carried with it an anxiety for the fate of the prisoners, the bombardment was kept up for about twenty hours with such effect that the Killidar capitulated, and fortunately none of the captives suffered."

The two British officers we found in a dress of coarse unbleached cotton, made into a form neither European nor Indian, but partaking of the nature of both; their beards had grown, and their appearance was, as may be imagined, extraordinary; but their health was perfectly good. They had been kept in ignorance of the advance of their countrymen, or the state of the war; the firing going on in the out-posts, was represented by their guard as the attack of some insurgents in the neighbourhood; the bursting of the shells over their heads was the first intimation of approaching deliverance, and the most joyful sound that had reached their ears for five dreary months. They had been at first used very harshly in the Fort of Kangooree, but they were removed to Wassota by Gokla's orders, and a letter in his own handwriting to the Killidar, desiring him to treat the two Europeans well, was one of several instances of a like generous character, tending to prove that Gokla had no participation in the cruelties of his master, and at that moment excited some feeling of pity for his fate. On most occasions the captive officers had been humanely

treated by the native soldiery; and they met with some remarkable acts of disinterested kindness and sympathy."

Gokla was the celebrated and faithful general of the Peishwa Bajee Rao, and had fallen about six weeks before the reduction of Wassota, whilst bravely charging a troop of English cavalry, at the engagement of Ashtah.

In the neighbourhood of Porundhur stands the town of Sassoor, a miserable place in itself, but containing a magnificent Brahminical temple, which is the resort of pilgrims from all parts of Western India, and deservedly an object of curiosity to every English traveller. The house in which the unfortunate Ameers of Scinde were imprisoned is also situated in Sassoor, very near the temple; and a more gloomy, vault-like building can scarcely be imagined, at least so far as regards the lower apartments, in which, upon an occasion, we once passed the night, arriving late, and feeling too fatigued to be inclined to climb the steep stone steps which we were told conducted to some very fine rooms above.

The examination of the temple amply occu-

pied the only hour which could be spared from the next day's journey, and we finally quitted the place with the full impression, that more effectual means could scarcely be devised for taming the spirit, and breaking the heart of a conquered prince, than dooming him to a protracted imprisonment in the melancholy abode of Sassoor.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ELEPHANTA — BOMBAY IN OCTOBER — HAVOC CAUSED BY INSECTS — EVENINGS IN THE VERANDAH — MOONLIGHT NIGHTS — PIC-NICS — A DAY AT ELEPHANTA.

CHAPTER XI.

THE termination of the rainy season on this side of India, is usually proclaimed by a tremendous burst of thunder and lightning, termed the Elephanta, and caused by the commencement of the Madras monsoon, which, like our own, sets in with all the violence of an unruly and turbulent spirit. For some days previous to this final crash, the heat becomes very oppressive; the atmosphere is charged with electricity, and the heavy thunder-clouds, which apparently form directly over the Island of Elephanta, roll onwards, to expend themselves in one terrific storm, which bears its

name, and which, notwithstanding the awful strife of elements, is eagerly hailed as the harbinger of approaching fair weather.

The gay visitors of Poona begin to disperse early in October, some betaking themselves to Mahabuleshwur, some to Khandalla; but the majority, whose term of leave or period of holiday has expired, must now resume their respective posts and duties in Bombay.

The month of October is not a very agreeable time of the year in any part of Western India below the Ghâts, at least until towards its termination, when the air clears, and the extreme closeness subsides. Indeed it has often struck us, that the old saying, which from time immemorial has referred to the month of March in England, is equally applicable to October in India; viz., "that when it comes in like a lion, it goes out like a lamb."

And now that a residence of some years in India, principally in Bombay, entitles us to speak with decision upon the subject of climate during the different seasons, we have come to the conclusion that, with the many so circumstanced as to be enabled to take only one

change in the course of the year, October is unquestionably the most desirable month for Mahabuleshwur or Khandalla, and the most objectionable in Bombay. The exhalations are very great after an abundant monsoon, and in the vicinity of the flats, and rice plantations especially, considerable malaria arises, which is naturally detrimental to the health of the inhabitants, and fevers are consequently more prevalent than at any other time of the year. But, fortunately, this trying period is of short duration, and comparatively trifling in its effects to those who possess the advantage of a residence close upon the sea-shore, where the lightest puff of air, coming up fresh from the ocean, unheated by a transit over the country, dispels the mists, and relieves the oppressive sultriness of the air nearly two hours earlier than on the other sides of the island.

The grand scourge of October is decidedly the insects. They appear now in incalculable varieties, springing into life from the most incomprehensible places; even tin boxes and camphor wood trunks, send forth their

hoards; immense black cockroaches are discovered snugly ensconced in the cavities of a lady's work-box; every article of woollen manufacture becomes fair game for the moths and other such rapacious visitants; and woe to the unhappy man, who, presuming upon the seclusion of Bombay during the rains, had carefully packed away his dress coat, without taking the precautionary measure of enclosing within the folds an abundant store of camphor or black pepper, to ward off the attacks of these destructive insects!

We remember a melancholy instance of the consequence of this improvidence happening to a young officer, who, upon his arrival in India, was destined to pass the first monsoon in Bombay. Just escaped from school, and a boy's jacket, it can easily be imagined how intense was the admiration with which he regarded the radiant glories of his gold-laced dress-coat, and how eagerly he anticipated the termination of the rains to give him an opportunity of displaying it. The absence of the Governor and Commander-in-chief from Bombay, permitted some relaxation from the severity

of full dress, and every one gladly indulged in the comparative comfort of a shell-jacket, even at the largest parties and the few "soirées dansantes" which occur during the monsoon.

At length came the long-coveted tidings of the Governor's return; and, as misfortunes are said never to come singly, it is to be presumed that the same rule equally applies to honours, for a card of invitation to Government House speedily followed our young ensign's preliminary visit, and this was succeeded by a ticket for an approaching ball.

Now although it might have occurred to him that a dress-coat was not altogether an unknown article in Bombay, yet no misgiving for a moment crossed his mind as to the superior effect it would produce when worn by himself; and, first bestowing a glance of satisfied scrutiny over his figure, as it stood reflected in the glass, the servants were summoned, the carefully closed box was opened, and the precious contents exposed to view. Never, surely, had the hatching ovens of Egypt proved more prolific in the production of animal life, than did this unfortunate box! An

article certainly was extracted; but bearing a much nearer resemblance to a piece of discoloured network, than to a new red coat. The cloth was completely riddled, and the numberless bodies of defunct cockroaches and moths scattered throughout, told plainly the tragic tale of warfare, and the pertinacity with which every thread had been contested. It was all up with the poor young ensign! and after a sharp struggle between mortified vanity and the terror of losing a ball, he was fairly reduced to the necessity of making his début in a shell-jacket.

But these little casualties are trifling compared to the poor ladies' sufferings, in witnessing the devastations committed by insects upon their tasteful fancy works; the demolition in one night of a basket full of worsted—we beg pardon, we ought to say Berlin wools—and often the total destruction in a few hours of an elaborately-stitched chair cover, or elegant piece of crotchet-work, which may have taken many months' hard labour to execute.

We believe it is now an universally acknowledged fact, that no class of mortals work half

so unremittingly as the ladies of the present day. Tread-mill labour is a mere joke, compared to their unceasing industry; especially since the importation from England of the crotchet mania, which seems to have seized upon every one, young and old, with equal "furore," and bids fair to supersede all other pursuits.

A lady of our acquaintance, in pathetically lamenting the great waste of time incurred by receiving morning visitors, gravely assured us that she had come to the determination of never relinquishing her crochet needle, but to continue working undisturbed by all the entrées and exits of a reception day, as though her livelihood depended upon the velocity with which she plied her needle. Now this would be by no means an agreeable system to establish universally in society. It is all very well for the ladies thus to employ themselves, whilst spending a morning at each other's houses; but for the poor gentlemen, uninitiated in the mysteries of crochet, and deplorably ignorant upon the subject of knitting and netting, it would become a positive hardship, if, during

the short half hour of their visit, they were to find the attention of their fair hostess distractingly divided between the reception of her guests, and the number of long stitches to be squeezed into the large space, or the amount of chains to be crammed into the small space. Thanks to "Punch," we begin to be rather scientific in the technicalities of the art, and boldly defy all criticism upon the correctness of these expressions.

But, "revenons à nos moutons," it would seem as though there were some degree of analogy as well as alliteration between cockroaches and crochet, for we find that the mention of one has imperceptibly led to a dissertation upon the other. However, we solemnly disclaim all intention of making invidious remarks upon the usefulness or uselessness of these rival powers; and most emphatically do we assure our fair readers, that, never for a moment, did it occur to us to pronounce one, nearly as great a nuisance as the other, to society at large.

It must not be supposed that Bombay, during the month of October, is absolutely without

enjoyment. As a very pleasing poet says, whose name we cannot recal,

"The gloomiest day hath gleams of light,
The darkest wave hath bright foam near it;
And twinkles thro' the cloudiest night
Some solitary star to cheer it.
The gloomiest soul is not all gloom,
The saddest heart is not all sadness;
And sweetly o'er the darkest doom
There shines some ling'ring gleam of gladness."

Now the gloom, which had gathered deep and dark over our souls, during the late apparently interminable monsoom of 1849, was so speedily dispelled by the gleam of gladness diffused by the first appearance of an October sun, that in common gratitude we were bound to admit that life was not altogether unendurable even in Bombay, and with lightened spirits, and carefully-booted legs, we bid defiance to the swarms of musquitoes, eagerly watching every assailable point upon which to commence their ravenous attacks.

The late monsoon was almost unprecedented in severity throughout this side of India. As we before mentioned, the average fall of rain in

Bombay is about seventy-five inches; but during the late season of 1849, it actually amounted to nearly one hundred and twenty in Bombay; whilst at Mahabuleshwur it was calculated that three hundred and thirty inches had fallen between the months of May and November.

After being so long debarred from the pleasure of out-door exercise, it may easily be imagined how delightful is an emancipation from the confinement of the house, and with what perfect amiability every one is disposed to consider the little "desagrémens" of the season, more especially as we know they will be but of temporary duration. Rides and drives recommence with redoubled zest, the darker habilliments of the monsoon disappear, and gay bonnets and feathers gradually emerge from their imprisonment of camphor-wood trunks, and tin-cases; in short, as a French gentleman joyously exclaimed, "les dames redeviennent coquettes." Ships long eagerly expected are now daily arriving from England, and discharging their interminable cargoes of millinery and haberdashery; whilst almost every lady is anxiously on the look-out for

some particular ship, conveying to her that most coveted of all acquisitions—a box of new finery, selected by her friends at home.

Yes! despite the scourge of insects, the powerful heat of the day, the sultry stillness of the eventide, October has its enjoyments, and, to our taste, one of the greatest, is the power of resuming the delicious after-dinner réunions in the verandah.

Every one in Bombay has either a profession, or some regular routine of duties for the employment of the day; and though possibly, the lassitude induced by the extreme heat, may indispose one for connected conversation, it diffuses over the mind an inexpressible charm, lulling to rest all the passions and irritabilities of the by-gone day, and rendering the heart doubly susceptible to visions of softness and beauty.

No pen can convey an adequate description of the glorious moonlight of India! Unlike the pale and fitful gleams with which it glances over our Northern home; here it sheds upon land and sea one steady flood of burnished silver, marking every object with

the distinctness, without the glare of day; and as the dark and graceful cocoa nut branch, heaves solemnly its feathery foliage, the imagination invests it with all the mysterious character of the enchanted helmet in the Castle of Otranto; and this impression is deepened by the soft sighing sound emitted from the cocoa nut tree, at the very slightest movement in the air, inducing that frame of mind so admirably touched upon by Byron in the following lines:

"There is a dangerous silence in that hour,
A stillness which leaves room for the full soul
To open all itself, without the power
Of calling wholly back its self-control.
The silver light, which hallowing tree and tower,
Sheds beauty and deep softness o'er the whole;
Breathes also to the heart, and o'er it throws
A loving languor which is not repose."

Though it may not be actual repose, it is at least a delightful imitation which we are as unwilling to relinquish, as to exchange the dreamy enjoyment of the verandah, for the closeness of a lighted bed-room, and the sleepless struggles through an oppressive night.

Towards the close of October the heat gradually subsides; the days become visibly shorter; and after sunset, a slightly bracing feeling is perceptible in the air, which soon brings back strength to the body and vigour to the mind. The mists which had alike clouded the island and the imagination speedily disperse, and a more healthful tone pervading the entire system awakens every one to energy, and a renewed inclination for the pleasures of social intercouse. As the waters subside on the Esplanade, carriages begin to assemble, bungalows and tents spring up in every direction, and the garrison band again makes its welcome appearance to cheer us with the sweet strains from which we have been so long debarred.

The fortunate residents of Bombay are never exposed to those extremes of temperature, which exist in the inland stations of the Presidency. They are neither subjected to the burning winds of the hot season, nor the intense cold which prevails every where above the Ghát during the winter months; so that, notwithstanding the relaxing nature of the climate, it is calculated

that a longer residence may be depended upon with impunity in Bombay, than in almost any other part of India.

Early in November, the mornings and evenings become delightfully cool; a general freshening of the air succeeds; and before the termination of the month, we might challenge the most favoured countries in the world, to produce a greater perfection of climate than Bombay then exhibits. Every breath is an enjoyment to those who are blessed with health and activity, and there is a happy consciousness that we may reasonably look for four months' longer duration of this agreeable weather, without a single misgiving upon the subject of cloudy skies, or rainy days, to interfere with the arrangement of a sail round the harbour, or a pic-nic excursion to the caves of Elephanta.

How often upon these occasions have we recalled, with a kind of mournful amusement, the various "contretemps" which unfailingly attend a pic-nic party in England. Every one's first question at the place of rendez-vous is sure to be the same, "What do you think of the weather?" The appearance of the smallest

cloud is the signal for anxious looks and gloomy forebodings, whilst a tolerably correct estimate of the value of the ladies' attire may be formed, by the eagerness with which the "élégantes" prognosticate a fair day; and the cheerful resignation with which the more homely clad anticipate "a very heavy fall of rain." Decidedly, England is not a country well suited for pic-nics, or indeed any out-door amusements, in which ladies are supposed to participate. But in India it is a very different matter: the rainy season once over, no drawback on the score of weather is at all likely to impede the arrangements for a journey, or the programme of a pleasure excursion; so, one fine morning, in perfect confidence that a delightful day was before us, we joined a large party in a visit to the island and caves of Elephanta.

This delightful little isle is situated on the north-east side of the harbour of Bombay, and is about seven miles distant from the fort, and five from the main land of the Mahratta coast. The entire circumference is only six miles in reality, although giving the idea of much greater extent, from the peculiar formation of the two

long hills and the intermediate valley, of which the island is composed, thus rendering it a conspicuous object from every surrounding eminence, notwithstanding the comparative insignificance of the elevation.

A pleasant sail of two hours, brought us within a hundred yards of the usual landing-place; and here we were told, that the only means of reaching the shore, was by submitting to be carried on the bare shoulders of our boatmen, who, unencumbered by any superfluity of clothing, took up their burdens, and waded through the surf with the greatest "sang-froid." Great was the dismay amongst the ladies, especially with two or three who had lately arrived in the country, and who loudly proclaimed their determination of remaining all day in the boat, rather than have recourse to such an odious alternative. As all remonstrance was useless, there was nothing for it but to obtain, after some delay, a couple of palanquins, in which the fair rebels were finally conveyed in safety to the shore.

The native name for Elephanta is Gareepoori, signifying "the place of caves;" it is

only amongst Europeans that its present appellation is recognized, having been originally bestowed by the Portuguese, from the circumstance of a colossal figure of an elephant, cut out of the solid rock, occupying the most important position on the island.

This gigantic memento of ancient superstition is still to be seen, though in a sadly mutilated state, bereft of the head and neck, and with a considerable portion of the lower limbs and trunk buried in the soil. It is to be feared that a few more years will entirely obliterate even its present dubious resemblance to the figure of an elephant.

The most barbarous havoc was committed by the Portuguese, in their bigoted zeal for the spread of their religion, by the extirpation of all vestiges of an opposing faith; and every corner of the island exhibits proofs of the persevering fanaticism with which they set themselves to the work of destruction, defacing the images, levelling the pillars, and even having recourse to the agency of fire, to accomplish more effectually the demolition of these wonderful works of art.

A very steep pathway leads from the water-side to a broad platform, upon which stands the principal cave, and from which the most beautiful view of the harbour and surrounding islands is obtained.

The cave-temples of Elephanta are undoubted excavations from the solid rock, but so elaborate in architecture, and so vast in dimensions, as to give some plausibility to the native tradition, that in former times a process was known to the Brahmins and inhabitants of Elephanta, by means of which the hardest stone was rendered ductile, and capable of being easily worked into any form whilst in a state resembling fusion in its effects, but which speedily subsided upon exposure to a free current of air. This story bears a marvellous resemblance to Hannibal's celebrated exploit of softening the rocks with boiling vinegar, and we suspect that both accounts may be considered equally veracious.

The date of the formation of these excavations is still involved in darkness, though it is now tolerably certain, that their antiquity is not so great as was formerly imagined, from the

exaggerated traditions of the natives of Bombay and the adjacent islands; for Elephanta itself has been always uninhabited ground since the establishment of the English in India. A few straggling Brahmins occasionally appear there on a temporary pilgrimage, or rather visit, to offer up prayers and oblations in a spot once the stronghold of their religion; but now divested, in their estimation, of much of its sacred character, from the mutilated state of the idols, and general desecration of the temple —all betokening an abandonment of the place by the tutelar deities.

The entrance to the principal cavern is very picturesque, possessing the insuperable advantage over that of Karli, of standing boldly open, and presenting a perfect view of the interior with its beautiful perspective line of pillars, terminating in the centre with the gigantic Trimurti, or figure of a three-formed god. This image is supposed to represent the three principal gods of the Hindoo worship; Brahma, the creator, occupies the middle and most important position, supported on either side by Vishnoo, the preserver, and Siva, the

destroyer. The last is plainly recognisable by the large snake which he holds in his hand, a favourite symbol both with him and his wife Parhuttee, who is often represented with an immense serpent encircling her waist. This remarkable triad terminates a little below the armpits of each figure, measuring nearly eighteen feet in length, and standing upon a raised platform approached by steps; it forms a most imposing object as viewed from the entrance to the cavern.

The principal temple is about one hundred and thirty feet long, and one hundred and twenty-three broad, including two large compartments to the right and left of the Trimurti. These appear to have been dedicated to the exclusive worship of Siva and Parhuttee, under the form of a double figure, half male, half female, named Viraj, for though both the images of Brahma and Vishnoo are discernible, they are placed in subordinate situations, as if awaiting the behests of the destroyer; Brahma seated demurely upon a lotus, and Vishnoo upon the back of his favourite eagle Garuda.

The interior architecture of this temple is of the most regular description; the roof was once supported by twenty-six pillars, and sixteen pilasters; but few of these now remain uninjured, thanks to the barbarous fanaticism of the Portuguese zealots, and the slow but sure process of undermining caused by the accumulation of water which collects in the caves during the monsoon. However, a fragment of every pillar still remains, sufficient to show the great solidity of the workmanship, and to impress us with wonder at the enormous amount of labour bestowed upon these fast perishing monuments of ancient superstition. Oh! might we dare hope, that before these crumbling evidences of a false religion have totally disappeared from the face of the land they have so long tended to darken, a purer faith may spread, and a brighter light may arise, to guide her long benighted children to the temple of the one true God.

There are several remains of unfinished excavations to be seen over the island. Indeed, from the peculiar position of these cavities, it

would seem as though the original intentions had been to form one continued line of temples communicating with each other, and effectually undermining the whole extent of the rock on both sides of the intervening valley.

Appearances certainly give plausibility to this surmise. But supposing it to be correct, the plan must have been abandoned from some unknown cause in an early stage of the proceedings, as the large temple is the only specimen of completion which the island exhibits.

Every care has been bestowed by the English Government to guard the relics of Elephanta from further spoliation. A small bungalow was erected some years ago, for the accommodation of an European sergeant appointed to watch over the temples and prevent any additional mutilation of the figures; but the abstraction of fingers and toes still goes on; the tip of a nose occasionally disappears, and various other pilferings of frequent recurrence, remind us pretty significantly, that even Siva himself is less destructive in his propensities than the modern antiquarian.

One luxury is found in the great cave of Elephanta, which Bombay, with all its advantages, does not possess; that is, a spring of delicious water, which gushes through the black rock in one of the compartments of the cavern, where the sun's rays have never penetrated, and falls sparkling and bubbling into a stone-basin beneath. It is so cool, so pure and refreshing, that it is positively well worth an expedition to Elephanta only to drink of this fountain, especially after being long doomed to the brackish waters of Bombay. In fact, before the happy introduction of ice, few people were so rash as to venture upon a draught of unadulterated Adam's ale, consequently the consumption of wine, beer, &c., was in a much greater proportion than in the present day, when we possess the inestimable advantage of obtaining in a glass of iced-water all the refreshment of a stimulant without any injurious results. Hence the custom—now almost universal in Bombay—of handing round a tray covered with glasses of this simple beverage alone, previously to the breaking up of the family party for the night; and often,

with great amusement, have we watched the dismayed faces of out-station visitors, or newly arrived guests from England, as this intoxicating draught is presented to them ; whilst in vain they cast an exploring eye over the tray, in the hope of detecting a stray bottle of sherry lurking in one of the crowded corners.

On one occasion in particular, we remember dining at a small party in company with an English gentleman just arrived from China, and of course still unemancipated from the board-ship habits of taking brandy and water at night. Rather taken by surprise at the colourless appearance of the fluid, which a servant was offering him, he seemed for one instant a little puzzled, but in the next a bright idea appeared to flash across his brain, and looking benignantly into the attendant's face he touched one of the glasses, and said, inquiringly :

" Milk-punch ?"

" Na, Sahib," replied the man.

The countenance of the thirsty interrogator visibly fell, but as speedily brightened as a new

thought suggested itself, and with a feverish eagerness he exclaimed:

"Noyau?"

"Na, Sahib," was the imperturbable reply.

"Then, what the deuce is it?" roared the half-frantic man.

"Sahib, peena ka panee hy." (It is drinking-water, Sir).

"Oh!" groaned the victim of a hopeful delusion, sinking back exhausted into his chair; but with an expression of irresistible fun, he soon sprung up, and accosting the lady who was next to him, politely entreated her to partake of some refreshment, after the heat and exertion of the evening; waving his hand with an air of comic importance towards the long array of tumblers, and as if in anticipation of her refusal, he added: "Pray, don't be alarmed, Madam; it is not by any means strong; the refreshment consists of 'cold water!'" and in a similar strain he did the honours of the tray round the room.

But the most amusing part of the story is, that after an absence of twelve months from Bombay, we were dining on our return with

the same family. Precisely as the clock struck ten, the host exclaimed:

"Butler, bring the refreshment," and to our intense delight, the summons was peremptorily obeyed by the appearance of the majestic Mussulman bearing with solemn deportment his tray of cold water!

All this time we have forgotten that our poor companions at Elephanta are sitting within the great cave, anxiously watching the preparations in progress for a substantial tiffin, which was to precede a ramble round the island.

We need scarcely say that ample justice was done to this meal, especially to a fine round of cold beef, despite the tales of travellers, that to the present day no particle appertaining unto a sacred bull or cow is ever permitted to appear within the holy precincts of a Brahminical temple. We can assure our readers, from ocular demonstration, that no kind of opposition was offered to us in giving this dish a conspicuous position upon the table, flanked on one side by a capital beef-steak, and on the other by a veal pie, thus exem-

plifying the old proverb, that "might makes right."

The entire Island of Elephanta is richly wooded; the creepers are luxuriant, hanging in festoons from the trees, and frequently forming verdant swings across the path-way; and every description of brilliant flowers and sparkling berry abounds in all directions, totally concealing the unpicturesque black rock, and clothing it in a mantle of evergreen beauty.

Little wonder is it that Elephanta should appear like a gem upon the waters, when viewed from any of the adjacent points, although we admit not the exclusive adaptation of the line

"'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,"

as in this case the closer the inspection, the more apparent is the exceeding loveliness of this island. After a delightful ramble of two hours, we all listened unwillingly to our boatmen's remonstrances and assurances, that the state of the tide would allow no further delay in embarking, unless we wished to pass

the night in the enlivening society of Siva and Parhuttee.

This intimation had a wonderful effect in sobering down our enthusiasm, and inclining us to decamp without loss of time; so betaking ourselves to the boats, we terminated with a moonlight sail, the pleasures of a day spent at Elephanta.

CHAPTER XII.

BOMBAY IN THE HOT SEASON — PUNKAHS — CHURCHES — THE ELPHINSTONE COLLEGE — PRINCIPLE OF EDUCATION — OLD GOVERNMENT HOUSE — THE TOWN HALL — THE MINT — DOCKS — BYCULLA SCHOOLS — THE JAMSETJEE JEJEEBHOY HOSPITAL — MALABAR POINT.

CHAPTER XII.

After accompanying us thus far in our Indian career, the reader scarcely needs the information that our head-quarters are fixed in Bombay, whence we have made many an agreeable excursion, as duty or inclination prompted, to visit the principal out-stations, or points of greatest interest throughout the Presidency.

We have now given a fair trial to every month of the year in Bombay; having luxuriated in the delicious climate of the cold season, drooped under the relaxing heat of the hot weather, and alternately enjoying the reviving

rain, and grumbled at the continued damp of the monsoon.

We have already detailed the usual plan of proceedings during the four winter months; but let it not be supposed that society is at a stand-still when the butterflies of fashion, or seekers of health, take flight for Mahabuleshwur. Balls and late evening parties certainly subside, leaving many

"A wreck behind,"

in the pallid young faces which had bloomed so freshly on their first arrival from England, at the commencement of the season. But dinner parties go on with unabated zest until towards the end of April, when the heat begins in good earnest to increase, gradually reaching the climax in May, and disinclining us for even the slightest mental exertion, after labouring through the duties—now become toils—of the day.

However, in Bombay we have but little cause for complaint, being totally free from the scourge of dry, hot winds, which at this time of the year blow fiercely over the

continent of India, approaching us as near as Ponoa. Here the heat is of a more relaxing character, by no means unhealthy in its general effect; whilst to those who suffer from delicate chests or consumptive constitutions, the climate is decidedly beneficial. Indeed, statistical reports prove, that there is less sickness prevalent during the hot weather, than during any of the other seasons, notwithstanding the very sensible diminution in strength, of which everyone is conscious.

Those whose duties confine them to in-door occupations, can get on exceedingly well with the help of large punkahs, which are now in full swing throughout the island, becoming absolute necessaries of life, and rendering even the hot dishes of a dinner-table endurable. But out of doors the power of the sun is terrific; and we would strongly caution the inexperienced stranger from attempting a round of visits, or venturing upon an inspection of the public buildings of Bombay, during the trying months of April and May, even should his stay in the island be ever so limited.

One very unfortunate effect of the action of a punkah at this time of the year is, the overpowering drowsiness it induces; especially with those newly arrived in the country, who struggle in vain to resist the leaden influence of its monotonous swing. It is of no use even to administer a sharp pinch, or a kick under the table to a poor youth labouring under the preliminary symptoms of nodding and starting; it is true, he will bounce up and regard you with that peculiar expression of profound wisdom, which a half awake person and an owl can alone assume; but the torpor is not to be repulsed, and in another moment he is fairly launched into the unfathomable depths of a heavy sleep.

Many a time have we seen a wretched man, seated at a dinner-table between two ladies, to whom he was struggling to render himself agreeable, and just as he fondly flattered himself the thing was handsomely done, becoming conscious of the approach of this insidious foe; and notwithstanding his convulsive endeavours to keep awake, finally and helplessly succumbing to the power of the

drowsy god, to the infinite amusement of his lively neighbours.

We remember some time back being present at a farewell entertainment, given to an officer on the eve of his departure for Europe. Now whether the spirits of the guests were affected by the heat of the weather, or that the coming separation "cast its shadow before," we cannot pretend to decide; but certain it is, that the party could scarcely, with truth, be designated as "lively;" in fact, we might almost venture to pronounce it "deadly lively," for during the hour of dinner no one seemed inclined to open their lips; a solemn silence would pervade the whole assembly for five successive minutes, interrupted only by the lulling hum of the punkah, as it swayed to and fro over our heads.

The unusual taciturnity of the host at length attracted our attention, and on looking towards him, we plainly perceived from his abstracted air, that some mighty thought was at work within the temple of his brain: even whilst we gazed the spark of intellect kindled in his eye, spread rapidly into a glow

of light over his countenance, and finally exploded in a burst of emphatic eloquence, as he rose to propose the health of his "honoured guest." Now, had this speech been of anything like reasonable duration, doubtless the unfortunate "dénouement" we are about to relate would not have occurred. We all bore up manfully through the laudatory introduction; experienced a degree of mournful resignation as the orator dilated upon the loss we must so soon sustain; but one and all we abandoned ourselves to utter despair, as he proclaimed his intention of giving "the deeply interesting details of this respected individual's career in India."

It was notorious to every one in the room, that nothing could well be more common-place than this "respected individual's career in India;" and moreover, an uneasy consciousness stealing over our minds that his society had been generally considered rather an infliction than otherwise, and that it was just possible his departure might not be regarded exactly in the light of an affliction, the reader may imagine the consternation of

the company, when, after an impressive pause, followed by a preliminary hem, our host thus proceeded:

"Gentlemen, I have ascertained from undoubted authority, that my esteemed friend landed in this country on the 24th of March 18—, and early distinguished himself by his urbanity of manner, and mildness of disposition: qualities, gentlemen, which must ever endear a man to those who have the pleasure of his acquaintance. (Here a faint snore was audible.) It does not appear that any circumstances arose during the succeeding ten years, calculated to give him an opportunity of taking a conspicuous part: doubtless had such occurred, he would have been foremost in the path of glory; but, gentlemen, a day was approaching—" at this interesting moment the voice of the orator was fairly overpowered by such a chorus of loud snores, that, with a look of consternation, he suddenly pulled up, and gazed aghast at the sight before him.

Out of twenty guests, twelve were in a sound sleep, and the remaining eight

fast lapsing into a state of unconsciousness. To this day, we have always sturdily protested that 't'was the punkah "did it."

There are many public buildings and institutions in Bombay, well worthy of inspection, which is now rendered practicable during the evening drive, by the increased length of the days. Twilight in India is very short, never exceeding half an hour in duration, even at this period of the year; whilst in the cold season it is considerably less. The English reader will be surprised to hear, that the difference between the longest and shortest day in this country is less than an hour and a quarter; the sun setting about half past six in June, and at eighteen minutes past five in December. But this additional hour of daylight gives time for a vast amount of sight-seeing, if discreetly distributed; and foremost, as in duty bound, we recommend a visit to our churches, which consist of St. Thomas's Cathedral, situated within the fort, and Christ's Church at Byculla, distant about three miles from the Cathedral. Besides these, there is a

small church at Senapore in the vicinity of the Esplanade, which is presided over by a member of the Church Missionary Society, who also superintends a large and admirably-conducted school attached to the Mission. The hours appointed for Divine Service are the same here as in England; viz., eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and six o'clock in the evening; but during the hot months of October, April, and May, the service is considerably curtailed, all that portion preceding the Litany being omitted, a precaution which is equally desirable for the clergyman and his congregation, on a broiling day, with the thermometer standing at 86° in the shade, and the punkahs indefatigably at work.

The Scotch Ecclesiastical establishment consists of two churches, now unhappily opposed to each other. The old Kirk, or the Scotch Church, as it is universally termed, is a handsome modern building, with a lofty spire, situated in the fort, and in close neighbourhood to the court house and the ice house. The Free Church is a more recent erection, and occupies a conspicuous spot upon the

borders of the Esplanade, near that great emporium of native learning, yclept "The Elphinstone College," or Native Education Institution.

This, as the name implies, was founded by the Honourable Mountstuart Elphinstone, in the year 1822, and is the head of all the Government educational establishments throughout the Bombay Presidency, undertaken for the avowed purpose of enlightening and cultivating the minds of the native youth, under the express stipulation that no interference with their religious creed is ever to be attempted. This admirable institution is under the control of the Governor, as president, a large committee of management, composed of some of the leading members of the English and native community, whilst the immediate and practical superintendence is conducted by six professors of first-rate talent and great experience.

Within the last year or two, this institution has experienced a severe loss in the departure of the head professor (Mr. H——) for England, compelled by ill health to abandon the severe

duties he had for many years ably fulfilled. Let it be distinctly understood that we disclaim all invidious inferences respecting those gentlemen who are, or will be, his successors, when we say, that his loss is irreparable, not only from the deep learning and remarkable versatility of talent which characterised him, but more especially from his possessing, in an eminent degree, that decision of character and inflexibility of purpose, so essential to command respect, and ensure success in an establishment of this nature. We earnestly hope to see him some day taking his place, with renovated health, at the head of that institution, which is so greatly beholden to him for the high position it occupies in the educational world.

It has been often a subject of sharp contention between conflicting parties, whether as christians we are or are not justified in conceding the grand point of religious instruction, to conciliate the prejudices of heathen natives. On one side, it has been urged by devout men, that christianity is the foundation-stone upon which all instruction should be based. Secondly,

that learning unaccompanied by religion is unblessed, and more calculated to mislead than to improve mankind; and finally, that the arguments usually adduced to prove the incapability of an untaught mind to comprehend the mysteries of the Gospel dispensation are not only fallacious but sinful, inasmuch as they impugn the power of the Holy Spirit to change the heart, and miraculously endue it with the light of true knowledge.

Though we admit the general force of these reasonings, we cannot altogether allow of their applicability to the present case. It must be remembered, that in endeavouring to impart religious instruction to the natives of India, our efforts are not met by a child-like unoccupation of the mind; an uncultured, but weedless soil, awaiting only the labourer's hand to spring into fertility.

No! deep are the prejudices to be contended against, and many are the tares to be eradicated, before the good seed can take root in the long corrupted soil. The vitiating bondage of caste must be broken; the belief in a monstrous Pantheon must be shaken, before

the sublime truths of the Gospel of Christ can find an entrance to their hearts. And now comes the christian's earnest inquiry: "How is all this to be effected? Can any power save that of the Almighty, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, remove this load of evil, the accumulation of ages?" We answer, "unquestionably not." The Great, the All-powerful God alone can level the mountain, cleanse the polluted spring, and cause the long-darkened waters to gush forth in whiteness and purity. But let us not forget that He can choose for himself the means by which His purposes are to be effected; and though in former days it seemed good unto His infinite wisdom to proclaim Himself to the world, amidst the thunders of Sinai, in the inspiration of His prophets, and the miracles of our Saviour, yet, whilst devoutly acknowledging His power, at any moment, again to display these wonders, we are not now to look for such visible manifestations of His glory. The necessity for miracles has passed away with the early days of christianity; abundant evidence, upon

which to exercise our faith, is given to us; we have the Holy Scriptures committed to us for our guidance, and God's appointed ministers for our guides.

As, therefore, we are not now to expect the interposition of visible superhuman agency, why may we not believe, that the means it has pleased Him to employ for the conversion of the heathen youths of India, is by putting it into the hearts of wise and good men first to improve the soil, by extracting the weeds, and thus prepare it for the reception of that good seed, which it is their ultimate object to implant. We learn from Holy Scripture, that even the blessed Saviour, whose power of working miracles was boundless, thought fit patiently to teach His followers by precept and example; and we are distinctly told, that it was not until after our Lord's resurrection, and consequently after a long initiatory course of instruction, that He opened the understandings of His disciples, "that they might understand the Scriptures," previously to the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the day of Pentecost.

Can we for a moment suppose, that the minds of corrupt Pagans are in a fitter state for the reception of the Spirit, and a knowledge of the mysteries of the Trinity, than were those of the early disciples, believers in the true God, and following the simple, unsophisticated calling of poor fishermen ?

Hitherto we have omitted to particularise the system upon which the course of education in the Government Schools is conducted. It can readily be understood, that no Indian parent would voluntarily commit the instruction of his children to English hands, without exacting a solemn pledge, that their religious creeds are never to be tampered with, and on this footing alone can we obtain the charge of a single child. But though the doctrines of christianity are thus expressly forbidden to be inculcated, no objection is made to the study of the Bible, as a means of historical information; and upon this one concession, this important basis, the Elphinstone College founds its hope.

Every boy is made thoroughly conversant

with the Holy Scriptures. Substantial proof of their historical authenticity is given to him by a comparison with other works. He is led to observe "the ways of God to man," as exemplified in the history of the Jews; the simplicity of worship required from us; the purity of life which is exacted of believers; the rewards which are prepared for the righteous, the punishments awaiting the wicked. His mind is undergoing a process of general, but imperceptible development; he learns to reflect, to calculate, to compare; and—with God's blessing upon our endeavours—it will follow in due course, that the monstrous absurdities of his father's creed will strike upon his enlightened mind with all that force of contrast excited by a knowledge of a purer religion, and that the faith he has learnt to despise, he will subsequently abandon. The weeds will be then eradicated; and his heart cleansed from the corruptions of a false belief, will, we humbly hope, be prepared to receive the good seed of Christ's most blessed word.

Thus, then, we arrive at the satisfactory

conclusion, that both wisdom and foresight are conspicuous in the plans adopted by Government for the education and ultimate conversion of the native youth of India; and although perfectly agreeing with one of our excellent chaplains, that it is not the mere enlightenment of the mind which constitutes true religion, yet we think every one will admit it is a powerful auxiliary towards sincere and permanent conviction.

We have lingered a long time upon the threshold of the Elphinstone Institution, and must now proceed to notice other objects deserving attention in Bombay. The old Government residence is within the walls of the fort, a large, melancholy-looking building: it is much more like a prison than a vice-regal abode, which, however, it has long ceased to be. It is now principally used for the transaction of public business and Government offices, for which purposes it is admirably adapted.

The Town Hall is a magnificent building, standing in the centre of the fort, in a spacious enclosure, called Bombay Green. The prin-

cipal room is of noble dimensions, handsomely decorated with statues and pictures, and is generally used for the purposes of holding councils, public meetings, balls, and various assemblages of learned societies, including the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. The Town Hall also contains an excellent library and museum belonging to the last-mentioned society, which is liberally supported by subscriptions and donations from almost every resident in the island, and is truly an immense acquisition to society at large. Other apartments, under the same roof, are often in requisition for the display of various scientific exhibitions, which occasionally make their way to Bombay; and altogether we flatter ourselves that the European "savant," upon first arriving in Bombay, will not find himself absolutely in a "terra incognita," as regards literature and science.

An hour or two may be both agreeably and instructively bestowed in inspecting the Mint, with all its wonderful array of steam-engines, and mechanical contrivances. The process of coining is here brought to the greatest

perfection, and is performed with marvellous celerity. From the first operation of rolling out the thick lead-coloured silver ingot, to the final burnishing of the finished rupee, an inconceivably short space of time is occupied, whilst the workmanship may vie with that of the London Mint for beauty of execution and finish.

The Court House is a handsome edifice, large and convenient in the internal arrangements; and besides those already mentioned, we have of course the usual supply of public buildings, such as Post Office, Custom House, and Banks. But we must not omit to particularize the Docks, which in Bombay are constructed on an unusually large scale, in consequence of the height of the tides permitting the admission of the largest sized ships. These noble docks are the property of the East India Company, who exact a high monthly rent for repairs, from all Queen's ships. During the springs, the tides rise to a height of seventeen feet, whilst the lowest neap-tides reach to fourteen feet; and thus the Dock-yard of Bombay is enabled to

produce not only vessels of the largest dimensions, but some of the best ships of the line; and frigates belonging to the British navy have been constructed within its gates. The timber used in the building of these vessels is invariably teak, supplied from the forests of the Western Ghâts, and which is now proved by experience to be more durable than even the far-famed oak of Old England.

There are several other buildings of considerable interest within the fort walls, such as the arsenal, hospitals, ice-house, and the Fort George and Town Barracks, appropriated to the accommodation of European troops; nor must we omit to mention the numerous shops kept by English and Native dealers, and the many handsome private dwelling-houses of Native gentlemen, amongst which the residence of Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy stands conspicuous. A few English families prefer residing within the fort, for the greater convenience it offers in vicinity to the offices; but the locality is not generally considered healthy, in consequence of the exhalations arising from

the large moat surrounding the fort, and which is supposed to occasion a greater prevalence of fever within than without the walls.

There is a large and most valuable educational institution situated at Byculla, about three miles from the fort, consisting of a handsome range of modern buildings, devoted to the reception and instruction of Christian children, and principally supported by private subscription. A small monthly sum is, however, required to be paid for children whose parents are known to have sufficient means; but in the cases of friendless orphans, or absolute poverty, a free admission is granted, and every advantage of useful education and a comfortable home bestowed. This establishment consists of two distinct school-houses, one appropriated to the boys, the other to the girls, both under the superintendence of the Governor, as president, one of the chaplains of the Established Church as secretary, and large managing committees of ladies and gentlemen, who take an active interest in the proceedings of the schools. The children are

principally from the class of English soldiers, under-clerks and half-castes; besides a large number of destitute orphans, who find here a most happy asylum, and receive an education befitting their station in life.

The boys are taught various useful arts, in addition to the usual routine of plain, solid instruction, such as turning, printing, lithography, &c.; and as they arrive at a suitable age, there is generally a demand for their services, either in counting-houses, public offices, or some trade or calling for which their acquirements and tastes render them most eligible.

But the grand difficulty is to provide for those girls who, having neither parents nor relatives to receive them upon the completion of their education, cannot be cast adrift upon the world, to be abandoned to all the vice and miseries of an Indian bazaar, and must necessarily remain burdens upon the funds of the school, until they can be disposed of in marriage. To effect this desirable object, a rather amusing system is established in the Byculla school, which answers the double

purpose of providing respectable men with wives (rather difficult articles to procure amongst this class), and making room for other pupils, by furnishing these young ladies with husbands.

When a man in a decent rank of life wishes to marry, and can prove that he possesses the means of maintaining a wife, it is customary for him to apply to the mistress of the Byculla school, state his wishes and qualifications, and inquire into the number and character of the marriageable girls. An investigation immediately follows as to his eligibility; and if all promises satisfactorily, he is forthwith invited to drink tea with the schoolmistress, upon an appointed evening, to give him an opportunity of making his selection. The elder girls are then informed of this intended visit, and its purport; and those who desire to enter the matrimonial lists, come forward and signify their wish to join the party. Frequently four or five competitors make their appearance on these occasions in the mistress's room. The gentleman, whilst doing his best to make himself universally agreeable, yet contrives,

in the course of the evening, to mark his preference for one particular lady. Should these symptoms of budding affection be favorably received, he tenders his proposals in due form on the following morning. But it often occurs, that the selected lady does not participate in the inamorato's sudden flame, in which case she is at perfect liberty to decline the honour of his alliance, and reserves herself for the next tea-party exhibition.

We have known an instance when an amorous old gentleman from an out-station presented himself three successive times at these "soirées," in the hope of obtaining a wife to cheer the solitude of his up-country residence; but all in vain, the young ladies unanimously rejected him with the highest disdain, wondering "how such an ugly old fellow could have the impudence to think of a wife!" But a very different reception is given to the dashing young sergeant, or smart looking conductor; their attentions are never repulsed, and the announcement of the "chosen intendeds," as Miss Squeers would say, is anticipated with the utmost impatience by

many an anxious young heart. The wedding speedily fellows, the bride's modest "trousseau" being provided from the funds of the establishment, and every girl in the school cheerfully contributing her aid in the manufacture of the dresses.

There are many valuable charitable institutions in Bombay, all of which are liberally supported by the rich Natives, as well as by the English. Amongst these is one especially worthy of notice, the Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Hospital, built and endowed at the joint expense of the munificent Parsee Knight, and the East India Company. It is a noble pile of building, of gothic architecture, corresponding with that of the Grant Medical College, which it adjoins so closely as to appear like a continuation. It was opened in May, 1845, for the relief of the native sick poor of all castes and religions, whose cases receive every attention that first rate medical skill can bestow; whilst their comfort is secured by the provision of three hundred beds for the accommodation of in-door patients, and an excellent dispensary attached

to the hospital for the relief of out-door patients.

We have omitted to mention another residence appropriated to the use of the Governor of Bombay, and generally selected as a favourite abode during the hot months of the year; this is a very pretty bungalow, though of small dimensions, beautifully situated on the little headland below Malabar Hill, and which, with the corresponding point of Colaba, incloses Back Bay. This is considered a rural retreat, admitting of relaxation from the ceremony and state entertainments which are incumbent upon the Governor to keep up at Parell. Consequently an invitation to a small dinner party at Malabar Point, is far more appreciated than a card to a formal entertainment at Government House.

The view of this little headland, as seen from the road skirting Back Bay, and leading up to Malabar Hill, is strikingly picturesque. The huge masses of black rock are here of gigantic proportion, offering an effectual barrier to the inroads of the ocean; some detached

Printed by Hullmandel & Walton

portions standing erect like sentinels keeping guard over the peaceful seclusion of the harbour, lest the struggling waves from without should ever presume to dash

> "Down those precipitous, black, jagged rocks
> For ever shattered, and the same for ever."

CHAPTER XIII.

BOMBAY IN THE RAINS—DINNER PARTY DURING THE RAINS—THE PARSEES—VISIT TO A WEALTHY PARSEE'S HOUSE—DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENTS—FURNITURE—PARSEE LADIES—DRESS—ORNAMENTS—RELIGION—PARSEE TOMBS.

CHAPTER XIII.

We do not consider it necessary to enter into any details regarding the state of society in Bombay during the monsoon; it is sufficient cursorily to remark, that nothing short of perfect health, and an easy conscience, could enable one to bear up cheerfully through the intense gloom of a season, which may be described as consisting of one uninterrupted succession of thunder, torrents, and tedium.

The rains generally begin about the last week in May, or the first in June, by which time the heat has become so intoler-

able, that the preliminary showers are warmly welcomed, and even a heavy fall of ten days' duration is borne with wonderful complacency. But beyond that, human nature cannot be expected to endure, without the relief of a grumble; and the natural consequence is, that faces become blue, as the sky continues black. The unsophisticated

"Gentlemen of England who live at home at ease"

can form but a faint idea of the amazing capabilities of rain, from merely witnessing a very wet day at home. Let them just picture to their imaginations, not fast-falling drops, but gushing torrents propelled through cylinders, continuing with pertinacious violence to pour on, sometimes for three weeks, without the slightest intermission, until the atmosphere becomes so thoroughly saturated, that no precautions we can take are sufficient to protect the houses, furniture, and clothes from the injurious effects of the damp.

This season of the year is, as we have already observed, most delightful in the

Deccan, and every one who can escape to Poona, invariably does; but those unhappy mortals who are compelled to remain in Bombay, in addition to the inevitable ills attendant on excessive moisture, have to endure a climate, the temperature of which is comparable only to a vapour-bath; whilst the impossibility of taking air or exercise, during the greater part of the monsoon, has an unfortunate tendency to induce derangement of health and discontent of mind. However, let us not be ungrateful, for as we before remarked,

"The gloomiest day hath gleams of light,"

and even the rainy season of Bombay has occasional breaks of fair weather and sunshine, which, coming "like angels' visits, few and far between," are rapturously hailed, acting as a sufficient stimulant upon our fainting spirits, to enable them in a measure to hold out during the four mortal months of the monsoon. These "breaks," as they are called, are eagerly taken advantage of for

the purposes of sociability, and many a pleasant dinner-party, and sometimes even a "soirée dansante" will be given by spirited individuals, who are determined to brave all the risks of sudden storms, and defalcations of guests, rather than endure any longer the monotony of total seclusion.

Sometimes these virtuous efforts are rewarded by complete success. The weather holds up, and every one makes his appearance in the happiest mood "to please" and "be pleased." The appetite, doubly whetted by previous abstinence, revels alike in the enjoyment of good society, and a good dinner; conversation is light and brilliant, and the whole affair goes off with so much "éclat," that other adventurous individuals are induced to send out invitations, in the fallacious hope, that "really if we ever are to have fine weather, it must be now."

Alas! for the instability of human expectations! Many a time in looking forward to a pleasant evening engagement have we stood anxiously watching the clouds, and, notwithstanding sundry internal misgivings, confidently

predicting to the desponding faces around us, that "the night would certainly be fine, so we may as well make haste and dress," and then pooh-poohing the intimation that rain was actually falling, persisting that "it could only be a shower, which would be over directly," and finally, starting in defiance of the coachman's warning remark that "asman khoob saf na hy" (the sky is not very clear) to encounter about half-way towards our destination, the most pitiless storm of wind and rain, against which no carriage could be expected to stand proof

Upon one occasion, we remember arriving under similar circumstances at a friend's house, and detecting speedily, by the uncomfortable looks of the host and hostess, that something was wrong. The rooms did not appear to be as brilliantly lighted as usual; and it struck us that the lady's dress—though we do not pretend to be a connoisseur in such matters—was of a more simple description than is customary at a dinner-party, for which a week's invitation had been issued. There was apparently much confusion going on in

the adjoining room. Sounds like shifting of furniture, and rattling of crockery, were distinctly heard; and when, after a long solemn sitting, dinner was at length announced, we discovered with dismay, that beyond our own party, no other guests seemed likely to make their appearance, whilst the host's temper was too visibly discomposed to enable him long to conceal the fact, that, calculating with certainty upon the state of the weather being such as not even a dog would unnecessarily face, he had given orders two hours previously for the arrangement of a dinner "en famille," with the snug anticipation of a quiet evening, and the enjoyment of a new "Quarterly." This was pleasant! but determined to make the best of a bad business, we set to work indefatigably to render ourselves as agreeable as possible: praised every dish upon table; pronounced the wines superb; patted the heads of a couple of odious, ill-managed children, protesting they were the living images of their papa; and even smiled with a kind of ghastly hilarity when one of the imps inserted his dirty fingers into our soup plate, declaring,

"he was as playful as a kitten." But it was all in vain; the host still looked surly, and the hostess frightened; so there was nothing for it but to decamp the moment dinner was over, breathing a solemn vow never again to venture forth upon a wet night to fulfil an engagement, unless, indeed, we were pretty well acquainted with the tempers of our entertainers.

We must, however, admit that it is a sore trial of one's amiability to go through a very protracted rainy season in Bombay, as an intelligent Parsee gentleman — who piques himself upon a perfect knowledge of the English language—once remarked with a deep groan, "Oh! this weather is very boisterious, and tyrannical!"

Can it then be a matter of surprise, that the Elephanta, with all its terrific accompaniments, should meet with a warm welcome, as the harbinger of brighter days? or that, whilst listening to the deafening sounds of heaven's artillery, the panic-struck Hindoo, cowering low in the dust, scarce dares to breathe, "How awful is the voice of Siva!"

The Christian, with elevated faith, and uplifted hands, should exclaim, "How glorious is the voice of God!"

We have as yet made but slight mention of the Parsees, although, as they form a large and influential community in Bombay, some notices of them may be acceptable to the general reader, who need scarcely be informed that they are the descendants of the ancient Persian worshippers of fire, adorers of the sun, and followers of the great Zoroaster. Expelled from their own country by the tyranny and bigotry of their Arab conquerors, they have for centuries wandered, like the Jews, as strangers through many lands; and, again, like them, the warlike spirit which distinguished their forefathers, has degenerated into an ignoble pursuit of traffic, an incessant craving for gain. In every spot throughout Asia, where wealth is to be acquired, there, Parsees are to be found, working onwards with indefatigable industry towards the grand object of their lives — the acquisition of riches.

The similarity in circumstances to the

children of Israel is conspicuous throughout the history of this remarkable race. Separated by their religion from all the rest of the world, and forming a strictly preserved community amongst themselves, they yet mingle in closest commercial relations with every class of people, frequently entering into partnership indifferently with English or Native dealers; and tending greatly by their acuteness and intelligence to the success of the most important undertakings. They are an enterprising and ambitious race, not only as regards the attainment of riches; but also in the cultivation of the mind, and improvement in all modern arts of civilisation and science they are ever eager to press forward. As shipbuilders, carpenters, and jewellers, they excel; and in fact it would be difficult to mention any trade, or mechanical business, carried on throughout Bombay, which has not a Parsee as the moving spirit of the concern.

The principal dwelling-houses in the island are now owned by Parsee landlords, and are either inhabited by themselves, or let out at high rents to the English residents, who

are rarely inclined to involve themselves in the troubles and responsibilities of land proprietorship, in a country where their stay is supposed to be merely of temporary duration.

It is a great point among the wealthy Parsee gentlemen, that the furniture and fittings-up of their abodes should vie with ours, in costliness and elegance of arrangement; and this is carried to an absurd height, considering the total dissimilarity of our habits and domestic relations. For instance, amongst them, the ladies of the family live completely secluded in distant apartments, never joining their husbands or sons even at meals, nor venturing to approach the magnificent reception rooms, which are got up regardless of all expense, lavishly decorated with chandeliers, mirrors, Persian carpets, couches, cabinets, ottomans, and even ornamental tables, covered with annuals, and every description of rare and tasteful "bijouterie."

Now, according to our ideas of congruity, these bowers of beauty are far better suited

for the reception of graceful womankind than for a party of bulky, rolling Parsees, with their stiff caps and unpicturesque costume. Certainly, these men do attain to an enormous size, as they advance in years; and their gait invariably acquires that description of rolling and swaying movement, which always characterises a sailor's walk upon shore.)

(The dress of the men is the very ugliest to be seen in an Eastern country, though well adapted to the climate and the comfort of the wearer. It consists of loose silk trowsers, below which are now exhibited English-made shoes, and often white silk stockings; a shirt of fine transparent muslin, and an outer garment of linen or calico, something of a tunic form, descending half-way down the leg.

This costume would not be amiss, but for the absence of a sash or girdle round the waist, which is universally worn by the natives of Eastern countries, and gives considerable style and effect to the general appearance; particularly when, as is usual

among the rich, it is composed of a handsome Cashemire shawl.)

These shawls are highly prized by the Parsees, who readily give large sums to obtain them of a superior quality; but a fair "Parisienne" would be shocked to hear, that these luxurious articles of dress are never appropriated to the use of the Parsee ladies, but are worn by their lords, huddled together in the most ungraceful fashion round their monstrous shoulders, to protect them from cold during the evening drive.

No signs are there in these degenerate days, of that celebrated symbol of their faith, the Guebre Belt, immortalised by Moore in his beautiful poem of "The Fire-worshippers," and mentioned by many travellers as being considered an indispensable portion of their dress, broadly distinguishing the wearer from the surrounding idolatrous nations.

Notwithstanding the seclusion in which the wives and daughters remain; they contrive to exercise considerable influence over their

"soi-disant" masters, managing to expend vast sums upon jewels and the decoration of their persons, with no other object than an occasional display of this magnificent paraphernalia to the ladies of their acquaintance.

We once accompanied some English ladies on a visit to a wealthy Parsee-house, containing, as is customary among these people, the entire family for four generations, commencing with the great-grandfather, and descending to the great-grandson, an infant in arms. This extensive family circle appeared to dwell together in the greatest harmony. Bigamy is unknown amongst them, and the gradations of rank being distinctly defined according to seniority, the respective wives of the sons and grandsons all seemed to unite in rendering superior deference to the venerable great-grandmother, the acknowledged mistress of the house; whilst each in their turn received that degree of consideration due to the husband's standing in the house. The gentlemen of the party were admitted no further than the general reception-rooms;

where, accompanied by our host, and his numerous male progeny, we amused ourselves in examining the countless curiosities and objects of "virtu" which thronged the room; whilst the ladies were ushered to the long range of distant apartments inhabited by the female portion of the family, who were all awaiting in fullest dress the arrival of the expected visitors.

To one of these ladies we are indebted for a minute description of the appearance and habits of the Parsee women, which we will give as nearly as we can recollect in her own words.

"We were shown into a long room principally furnished with couches, upon which were seated five or six females, surrounded by children and their attendants; the entire party, even to the baby in arms, covered with the most amazing quantity of jewels. The eldest lady of the party occupied the centre couch, and acted as spokeswoman for the remainder, who were unable to converse in any other language than the Guzzerattee, an unknown tongue to us; but we made our

way tolerably well in Hindostanee, and in a few minutes were quite on an easy footing with them all, learnt the different degrees of relationship subsisting between the parties, and examined with deep interest and curiosity the costly gems with which they were decorated. Strings of large diamonds, emeralds, and pearls hung from the neck to the waist; whilst the arms were almost hidden from above the elbow to the wrist, by the numerous bangles or bracelets, composed of valuable jewels, but to my taste quitè thrown away by the frightful setting and tasteless arrangements.

"Certainly the Parsee ladies' ideas upon the becoming, differ materially from ours. One of them asked me 'if all English women spoilt their faces as we did, by showing the hair, and wearing no nose jewels?' adding that 'without the latter ornaments it was impossible for any countenance to be expressive.'

"I replied, 'that we should consider this a dreadful disfigurement; whilst a fine head of hair always elicited universal admiration,

and indeed is reckoned one of the most material points of female beauty amongst us.'

"I asked her how the hair was disposed of with them? Whereupon, laughing merrily, she threw back her saree, and the disfiguring kind of bandage which concealed the forehead and head, and shaking down a quantity of black silky hair, her eyes sparkling with animation, she really looked so beautiful, that I could not refrain from loudly exclaiming against the barbarous style of costume which thus transformed a perfect houri into a bandaged Egyptian mummy.) Another personal disfigurement they very ingeniously contrive, by perforating completely their small, delicately formed ears all round, inserting such heavy jewelled pendants, that the shape becomes distorted with increasing years, and the appearance of the feature is so unnatural, that I was glad to see the saree drawn over it. All these ladies were of small stature, with slight and graceful figures, regular features, and a pale olive complexion, which in their estimation is the highest attribute of beauty.

"My sociable friend pointed out to me a little girl of about nine years of age, who, she said, was so strikingly fair, that her hand had been eagerly sought in marriage by several before she attained her fourth year. She had been now for some time betrothed to the son of a wealthy Parsee; and when of sufficient age to be separated from her mother, she was to take up her abode in the family of her future husband. She was a sweet, gentle little creature, with an expression of melancholy in her soft gazelle-like eyes; and judging from the mother's constant caresses and looks of love bestowed upon her child, I could well imagine how heavily the thought of approaching separation must press on both their hearts.

"I was delighted to see some specimens of needle-work strewed about the room, such as canvass-work and embroidery; and upon inquiring how they had learnt these arts, I was informed that an English missionary lady had lately given them some instruction in the use of the needle; and that the father was so astonished at their progress, that he talked of

allowing them to learn the pianoforte, and had actually provided a magnificent instrument in anticipation.

"I begged to see it, and never shall I forget their delight as I ran my fingers over the notes. The entire female household, including the servants, gathered round me, clapping their hands, as I played a few lively airs; and when at length I rose to depart, they all loudly entreated me to come soon again, and stay the whole day with them.

"I could not detect the slightest symptoms of unhappiness or repining at the seclusion of their lives. They appeared perfectly contented, assuring me it was the custom, and they had no wish to go beyond the limits of their own apartments, and never thought of taking a drive, although the coach-house contained several handsome English carriages for the use of the gentlemen of the family. Their only recreation appeared to consist in giving occasional parties to the ladies of their acquaintance, and making a grand exhibition of silken sarees and costly jewels. I was

greatly amused to hear, that of late, it is considered an essential mark of style and fashion to wear English silk stockings beneath their embroidered slippers on a party night, though the usual custom is to have the feet and ankles uncovered, with the exception of the handsome jewelled ornaments called anklets, which are clasped round them."

Whilst our fair friends were paying their devoirs to the ladies, our time was pleasantly occupied in accompanying the gentlemen over every part of the extensive house and grounds; inquiring into their social habits, and questioning the young grandsons, who were students in the Elphinstone College, upon their progress in the different branches of learning.

We were astonished at the intelligence and proficiency they displayed. Their knowledge of ancient and modern history might put many an English school-boy to the blush; and even a classical subject, which we started, was discussed by three animated youths with acuteness and ability.

Had we needed any confirmation of our previously expressed conviction, that education is a sure and direct means of undermining a false faith, and implanting a true one; a stronger could not be produced, than that which the conversation of these lads afforded. Every word and glance betokened that the creed of their fathers could no longer be their creed.

The science of astronomy had shown them that the sun, which they worshipped as a god, was but a part of the vast planetary system of the universe; no more worthy of adoration than the countless bodies which surround it, all being the creation of One all great, all powerful Cause. It is true, the modern Parsees, when taxed with idolatry, protest that they render homage and address prayers to the sun and fire, merely as being the brightest emanations, the most visible attributes, of the one presiding Deity who formed them, and who delights in being worshipped through the most glorious of his works. Doubtless this was the original faith inculcated by Zoroaster, but from which his

followers have so sadly degenerated, that we defy a zealous Parsee of the present day to deny that, although they may not exactly be called gods, yet the number of acknowledged good spirits to be entreated, and of evil spirits to be propitiated, render their Pantheon nearly as voluminous as that of the Hindoos.

(It is a touching sight to watch the Parsees' on the beach of Bombay, paying adoration to the setting sun. Perfectly indifferent to the notice of strangers, they continue repeating rapid prayers, prostrating themselves upon the sand, and exhibiting every outward sign of intense devotion, until the luminary, sinking into the sea, gives the signal to arise, and enjoy in sociable groups the pleasures of conversation in the cool evening air.)

(The Parsees neither bury their dead, like the Mussulmen, nor burn them, like the Hindoos, but expose them on the top of high towers to be devoured by birds of prey;) allowing the bones, when denuded of flesh, to fall through an iron-grating into a pit beneath, from which they are afterwards

removed through a subterranean entrance made for the purpose. These tombs are always erected upon elevated spots in secluded situations; they bear the appropriate appellation of the Towers of Silence, from the solemn stillness which reigns around, unbroken save by the flapping of the vulture's wings, when roused from its loathsome work by the sounds of approaching footsteps. It is a fact, that a large species of this bird was imported into Bombay from a neighbouring country some years ago by the Parsees, in order to effect as speedily as possible the total demolition of the mortal remains of their kindred, so as to prevent all possibility of the air becoming infected with the horrible effluvia of decomposition. However revolting this custom may appear to us at first, it is not in reality more so than our own—or indeed as the Parsees urge, scarcely so much so—in burying our dead; and thus committing them to the certain, though unseen corruption of the earth. So rapidly do these vultures effect the work of destruction, that a few hours only are said to elapse, after a corpse has been deposited

upon the grating of the Tower, before every vestige of humanity has for ever disappeared, and the subterranean vault beneath, receives only the uncorrupting portion of what was so lately a living man.

CHAPTER XIV.

DEPARTURE FOR SEROOR — AHMEDNUGGUR — OUTLINE OF ITS HISTORY — THE EMPEROR AURUNGZEBE — THE FURROH BHAG — THE BAHEESTY BHAG — THE TOMB OF SULABHUT KHAN — DUMREE MUSJID — THE HAPPY VALLEY.

CHAPTER XIV.

After remaining an unusually long time stationary in Bombay, we were suddenly seized with a spirit of enterprise, and an uncontrollable longing to visit some of the more distant out-stations of the Presidency; more especially, one at least of those places, where are to be seen the magnificent ruins of palaces and tombs, indicative of that unforgotten grandeur which distinguished the Mahommehan dynasty in India. Accordingly armed with the full powers which leave of absence bestows, and with two agreeable companions as fellow-travellers, we took

advantage of an early break in the rains, to start one fine July morning on an excursion through the most interesting part of the Deccan, taking the same route as previously described, through Khandalla and Karli, as far as Poona. There we came to grand halt, to look about us, and gravely consult upon the whereabouts of our future movements; but it did not take us long to come to the unanimous conclusion, that the city of Ahmednuggur should be the first object of our travels, making a short stay "en route" at the midway station of Seroor.

This place was formerly the cantonment of the British troops, stationed in the province of Aurungabad during the Mahratta war; and from its central position, continued to be occupied by a considerable force, until the total subjugation of the surrounding country rendered it unnecessary to maintain there more than a local corps. It is now the headquarters of the Poona irregular horse, a fine efficient body of men, whose colours bear honourable witness to their services in many a hard-fought engagement; whilst they have

now the pride of claiming as their commandant, the gallant Major Tapp, one of the wounded heroes of Mooltan, and one of that noble band (the Fusileers) whose bearing one and all throughout the late campaign, would alone ensure for them immortal laurels.

Up to the year 1820, Seroor contained a number of European bungalows surrounded by pretty gardens, inhabited by the officers of the different regiments; but these have gradually fallen into decay, since the place has ceased to be a military station; and no further accommodation is now required than for the commandant, second in command, and surgeon, belonging to the Irregular Horse, who, with one civilian, now constitute the entire resident society of Seroor. However, it is considered by no means a dull station. Situated about half way between Poona and Ahmednuggur, it is a general thoroughfare to and from those cities, and is likewise the high road to Aurungabad, the caves of Ellora, and the large province of Candeish. There is of course a Government bungalow for the reception of travellers, but

the well-known hospitality, which pervades the small circle of Seroor, renders the accommodation almost nominal. We were urged by some of the natives to visit the tomb of an English officer, Colonel Wallace, conspicuous for his services during the Mahratta war, whose remains were interred in the burial-ground of Seroor. It is said, that the facility with which he reduced some of the strongest forts of the Deccan, caused him to be regarded with deep awe by the simple-minded natives, as one possessed of supernatural powers; and they still assert, that whenever a public calamity is about to occur, the ghost of Wallace Sahib is sure to be seen restlessly wandering round the limits of the British camp; and that without performing various ceremonies at his tomb, to appease his spirit, and avert the impending danger, the most dreadful consequences will be the inevitable result.

The road, though occasionally hilly, is altogether very good, between Seroor and Ahmednuggur; the scenery for a time tolerably varied, but gradually merging into a line of

grotesquely-shaped hills, of a barren and stony aspect, uncheered, but at long distances, by a grove of tamarind trees, or patches of verdure.

We entered the cantonment of Ahmednuggur about nightfall, and the first impression was decidedly that of unmitigated wonder at its extent; for we must have traversed full four miles from the commencement of the camp, before we reached our destination at the hospitable bungalow of an officer in the infantry lines.

Ahmednuggur stands upon an extensive plain, so completely encircled by a range of hills, as to have all the appearance of a basin, although in reality situated upon elevated ground. These hills extend in an almost unbroken line from Jooneer on the west, to the town of Bheer on the east; and in former days of prosperity were distinguished by the name of the Ahmednuggur range, forming from Jooneer, a branch of the great western Ghâts which run down the entire side of India

Ahmednuggur was first made into an

independent state in the year 1487, by the Prince Mullok Ahmed, who assumed on ascending the throne the titles of Ahmed Nizam, Ool Moolk Byheree. He was the founder of the Nizam Shahee, or Byheree dynasty, and was succeeded by eight of his descendants in succession, although the two last named Ibrahim Shah, and Bahadur Shah, were merely nominal sovereigns, the former having met his death in battle after a reign of only four months' continuance; and the latter having been taken prisoner when an infant by the Moguls, and confined for life in the fortress of Gwalior. With this unfortunate prince, ended the Nizam Shahy dynasty of Ahmednuggur, about the year 1600; but it was not until A.D. 1634, that these dominions became a proclaimed province of the great Mogul empire, under the general name of Aurungabad.

The kingdom of Ahmednuggur, formerly comprised the greater part of the province of Berar and Aurungabad, several districts in Candeish, and a tract of country extending from Bassein to Bancoot, in the Concan. It

continued in the possession of the Moguls, until the death of the Emperor Aurungzebe, in the year 1707, when it was speedily seized upon by the Mahrattas, and formed part of the Peishwa's dominions up to that period in 1797, when Dowlet Row Sindia contrived by force to obtain the cession of this important fortress and surrounding district; thus securing an easy entrance into the territories both of the Peishwa, and our ally, the Nizam. He was, however, obliged to relinquish his conquest in the year 1803, when the fort of Ahmednuggur was taken by the British troops under General Wellesley, after a two days' spirited resistance from the besieged, and the loss on our side of twenty-eight men killed, and twenty-two wounded.

It was finally ceded to us by a treaty signed on the 30th December of the same year; our ultimate object being to restore it to the legitimate owner, the Peishwa Bajee Rao. But his subsequent treachery rendered all our good dispositions towards him nugatory; and from the year 1818 the city and districts of Ahmednuggur have formed one of the most

important collectorates of the British territories in Western India.

The fort is about a mile in circumference; built entirely of stone, and surrounded by a deep broad ditch, serving in these happy days of peace as a safe asylum for—what think you, reader?—a herd of harmless deer! But in former days of warlike struggles, the ancient fortress of Ahmednuggur was the scene of many heroic deeds. Many a siege has it bravely sustained; and two are more especially noticed by native historians, as having been for a considerable time maintained with dauntless courage by a woman, the intrepid Chaund Beebee, daughter of Hoossein Nizam Shah, and widow of Ali Adel Shah, one of the Kings of Bejapoor. This celebrated lady was basely assassinated during the second siege, it is supposed at the instigation of the invading Moguls; as the surrender of the fortress immediately followed, and proved to be the forerunner of the subjugation of the entire kingdom, to the power of the Delhi kings.

The most magnificent of these sovereigns, was the great Aurungzebe, third son of Shah

Jehan, and father of the beautiful princess Lalla Rookh, whose name, thanks to the "sweet bard of Erin" has become familiar to every English reader.

The Emperor Aurungzebe was a man whose consummate hypocrisy, unscrupulous ambition, and successful career, cause him to bear a striking resemblance both in character and circumstances to our Oliver Cromwell, of whom also for a short time he was a contemporary, having been formally crowned Emperor of the Moguls two years' previous to the Protector's death. Like him, he made the profession of great sanctity and self-denial the stepping-stones to future greatness; carrying on for many years a system of such profound dissimulation, as completely to impose upon his father, Shah Jehan, and his youngest brother, Mourad Buksh, who had subsequently bitter cause to lament their credulity.

A short, but interesting account of the life of Aurungzebe is given by Colonel Sleeman, in his amusing work, entitled "Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official," which mentions, with reference to the long course of

hypocrisy practised by him, with a view to ultimate aggrandisement, that "he always carried the Koran under his arm, and was observed regularly at the proscribed five times in the day at his prayers, which he repeated with a loud and singularly melodious voice. He was a rigid religionist, according to the sect of the Loonnees, or Turks, and never appeared in public except in a clean white dress, unadorned by any of those jewels and expensive ornaments worn by the members of the imperial family. He had inscribed his name among the Fuqueers, or religious mendicants, lived altogether like one upon rice, roots, and water, and never indulged in wine or any other luxury whatever of the table. From his tenderest years, he seems to have been strongly impressed with the conviction, that on the death of his father, his life must depend upon his ability to conquer and destroy all his brothers; or to persuade them that he sought nothing but a peaceful religious retirement near the tomb of his Prophet. This youngest brother became his dupe, but his eldest brother, Dara, knew him well, and used always to

say, 'of all my brothers, I fear only that man of prayers' (Nimazee), and Shoojah was just as well aware of the true nature of his character."

Fully were these misgivings realised. Within a short period, this accomplished hypocrite had imprisoned his father, seized upon the throne of Delhi, and totally defeated his three brothers, whom, with their families, he caused to be either assassinated or shut up for life in the fortress of Gwalior. We cannot refrain from narrating, upon the above-named authority, the speech of the Princess Jehanara, eldest sister of Aurungzebe, upon the occasion of a visit of pretended condolence, which he paid her on their father's death.

He found spread out to be presented to him all those jewels of immense value, which he had tried in vain to get from her and his father, during his lifetime. "These," said she, "are all yours, as the first surviving representative of the house of Tamerlane; what has made you so, we must now try if possible to forget!"

After all, the atrocities whcih disgraced his

early career, the rule of Aurungzebe was wise, and his reign prosperous. Though ostensibly residing at Delhi, the magnificent capital of his vast dominions, he spent much of his time at Ahmednuggur, embellishing it with many ornamental buildings, especially by the erection of a splendid palace, which appears to have been one of his most favourite places of abode, and which still bears the name of the Furroh Bhag, or garden of pleasure. It is a handsome square building, surrounded by a wide moat, and extensive grounds, tastefully laid out in alternate lawns and avenues of beautiful trees.

The roof of the palace is flat, forming a noble terrace, which commands a view of the whole country round; and from this elevated position, Aurungzebe delighted to review his troops, both cavalry and infantry, who had ample space for their evolutions in the noble parks beneath. Notwithstanding the enormous thickness of the walls, and general solidity of the building, symptoms of decay are fast appearing; large stones are gradually becoming detached; and it is now

rather a service of danger to attempt climbing the steep turret-stairs, which lead to the roof.

Many spirited individuals have conceived the idea of purchasing the Furroh Bhag from Government, and of putting it into thorough repair to render it eligible as a handsome English residence; but the magnitude of the expense to be incurred has hitherto proved the stumbling-block. Every one considering his stay at an out-station, as merely of temporary duration, is naturally unwilling to enter upon any large territorial outlay, from which he may possibly never derive any benefit; therefore, it is to be feared, that unless speedily taken in hand by Government, this noble edifice will soon be but a crumbling ruin in the dust.

About four miles from the Furroh Bhag on the north side of Ahmednuggur, stands a beautiful summer palaçe in a spacious park which is said to have been built by Aurungzebe, as a cool retreat for his sons during their childhood. It is called the Baheesty Bhag, or garden of Paradise, and consists of a really

elegant little octagonal building, that forms an island in the centre of a large moat which has a particularly pretty effect, as it is seen through the lofty arched entrance, which terminates the fine avenue of trees leading to it.

About a mile from the Octagon Palace, but enclosed in the same grounds, is a very remarkable looking ruin, bearing more the appearance of a prison than a pleasure-house, the lower rooms being dark vaulted chambers, secured by doors of enormous strength; while the upper part, now fast crumbling away, seems like the remains of what may formerly have been intended for a watch-tower. There is a melancholy air of silence and decay throughout this once beautiful demesne, which does not strike one so forcibly in any other part of Ahmednuggur.

It stands more isolated at a greater distance from the camp and English residencies, and has been allowed to fall into more absolute decay, possibly from being less solidly constructed than the many edifices which remain to mark the tasteful hand

and liberal spirit of the Emperor Aurungzebe.

On the highest pinnacle of a range of hills, a few miles from the camp, stands the mausoleum of Sulabhut Junej Khan, who for many years acted a conspicuous part in the wars which devastated the Mahratta country. He was the third son of Nizam Ool Moolk, and was chosen Viceroy of the Deccan in the year 1751, which post he ably sustained through a period of continued warfare and difficulty, until he was finally vanquished and imprisoned in the fortress of Beder by Nizam Ally.

Little is known of him after this unfortunate event, which occurred A. D. 1762; but his memory is still cherished among the Mahommedan community of Ahmednuggur, and his magnificent tomb continues an object of great veneration, and is still the resort of pilgrims from all the adjacent country. It is an undertaking of considerable difficulty to climb the steep hill upon which the mausoleum is situated; but even when the summit is attained, the most fatiguing part of the

expedition remains to be accomplished in mounting the deep, narrow stairs leading to the terraced roof, which being formed out of the thickness of the outer wall, wind round it like a corkscrew, leaving the entire centre of the building open from the ground floor to the roof, somewhat resembling one of the old ancestral halls of England.

However, the view from the terrace well repaid us for the labour we had expended in reaching it; and notwithstanding the aching of our bones for many a day after, we strongly advise every one journeying through Ahmednuggur, to pause and pay a visit to the tomb of Sulabhut Junej.

We must not forget to mention a small Mussulman building of modern erection, called "The Dumree Musjid," situated on the plain, within sight of the fort and English burial-ground at Nuggur. This is remarkable, not only for the elaborate carving and immense size of the stones with which it is constructed, but from the circumstance of the funds requisite for the building having been raised by

THE GREAT DOOR OF THE NAVE, LOOKING WEST.

the contribution of a single dumree* from each of the poor Mahommedan inhabitants of the city.

Although Ahmednuggur has in itself no claims to picturesque scenery, yet it can boast of possessing in close neighbourhood as lovely a spot as might ever be seen in rich and fertile England, and appropriately named "The Happy Valley." In truth, we are almost tempted to believe that the disembodied spirit of the learned Johnson must have visited this place—mayhap in some mesmeric sleep—before he penned the story of his Abyssinian Prince, languishing for liberty amidst the beauties of his prison bower. Like the abode of Rasselas, the existence of this valley would never be suspected at the distance of a few yards from the only approach—a flight of steps, cut from the solid rock so abruptly, that a person descending them has all the appearance to a looker-on,

* A dumree is the smallest coin in circulation, considerably less than the English farthing.

of suddenly sinking into the bowels of the earth.

There can be little doubt that this remarkable spot owes its formation to some grand convulsion of nature in ages past, of which, however, no record remains. The surrounding country consists of the barren, stony plains of the Deccan, with only an occasional clump of trees, few and far between, to relieve the dreary monotony of the scene. But upon standing on the brink of the chasm which forms the Happy Valley, the spectator might readily fancy that the hand of some mighty giant had rent the earth asunder, pouring into the cavity such a stream of rich luxuriant fertilisation and beauty, as to present a startling contrast to the rough robe which nature wears above.

The first flight of steps conducts to a small platform, upon which are erected two buildings of rather opposite purpose and style, one being a handsome Hindoo temple thronged with Brahmins, the other a comfortable, solidly built bungalow appropriated ostensibly to the use of the collector and his assistants, during their distant tour, but of more general utility

as affording shelter to the numerous pic-nic parties incessantly repairing to the Happy Valley, to enjoy the pleasures of a day's sporting, or a day's flirting, as the case may be. Touching the latter agreeable pastime, we must just hint "en passant" that it may be carried on to perfection amidst the umbrageous paths and secluded dells of this romantic spot, where even the mid-day sun is braved with impunity; and sooth to say, many a long-delayed proposal, and many a willing acceptance, are brought to a happy conclusion whilst the parties "wander not unseen" in this miniature paradise. At the bottom of the valley flows a beautiful rivulet, which swells so rapidly after a fall of rain as to assume the appearance of a small river, giving absolute perfection to the landscape, particularly in one spot, where a magnificent banian tree has flung its fertile roots across the stream, thus inclosing the picture in a natural frame of arching branches, and evergreen foliage.

The Happy Valley being only eight miles distant from the camp of Ahmednuggur, is easily reached in an hour's canter across the

plain, in the early morning, and a most pleasant excursion it is; of just sufficient extent to ensure amusement and occupation for an entire day (including breakfast and tiffin in the cool bungalow), without risk of "ennui" or fatigue, and a gallop home, in time to prepare for the evening's engagements.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SISTERS' TOMB.

CHAPTER XV.

SITUATED at the northern extremity of the camp of Ahmednuggur, near the Candeish road, stands a building of considerable interest, and much architectural beauty, named the Sisters' Tomb. It consists, in reality, of two distinct tombs, united almost imperceptibly by a band of stone-work, with separate arched entrances, and those symmetrically-formed domes, which distinguish the mausoleums erected during the Mahommedan dynasty in Western India. Upon several occasions within the last twenty years, this building has been converted into a comfortable English

dwelling by the addition of a few temporary out-houses or offices, which however seldom long survive the departure of the last occupant, and the tomb invariably resumes its pristine, and picturesque appearance. Under this aspect we prefer representing it, though at the present time it forms the habitation of a gentleman, who has contrived with consummate taste and skill, to unite the apparent incongruities of a Mahommedan tomb, with an elegant English residence, without in the slightest degree deteriorating from the simple beauty of the original structure.

Various stories exist touching the origin of the romantic name attached to these tombs; and though nothing absolutely authentic appears to be known, we will relate a little tale which was told us by a venerable-looking Mussulmaun with a white flowing beard, who solemly assured us that the following incidents were strictly correct.

THE SISTERS' TOMB.

Mahmoud Sultan was the eldest son of the Emperor Aurungzebe, and for a long time fought bravely under his banners in the unnatural war raging between him and his brother the Sultan Shoojah. In early youth, and before these unfortunate dissensions had arisen in the family of Shah Jehan, Mahmoud became tenderly attached to his cousin Aesha, daughter of Shoojah; and with the entire consent of his father and uncle, he was solemnly betrothed to her in the city of Delhi, in a spacious and magnificent pavilion temporarily erected for the occasion, to accommodate the vast crowds, who joyfully hailed this union as the harbinger of peace and harmony throughout the empire. These happy anticipations were, alas! soon to be dispelled. But a few years elapsed, when the cupidity of the wily Aurungzebe was awakened by a description of the vast riches contained in the diamond mines of Golconda; and the demon

of ambition which at that period so powerfully seized upon his mind, rendering him unscrupulous as to the means by which his ends were to be attained, soon incited him to the rupture of this engagement; and despite the tears and entreaties of his unfortunate son, he forced him into a marriage with the eldest daughter of the King of Golconda, with the stipulation that he should succeed to the throne upon the death of his father-in-law. Only a few days prior to this event, the princess Aésha had given birth in secret to twin daughters. Attended only by a faithful ayah, who carefully concealed from her unhappy mistress every circumstance which might tend to agitate, or retard her recovery, she remained in blissful ignorance of this impending blow, until the return of her father Sultan Shoojah, who was then engaged in active warfare against Aurungzebe and his son Mahmoud.

Burning with indignation at the new outrage offered to his family, Shoojah rushed into his daughter's tent, and with frantic words and gestures related to her the supposed treachery

of Mahmoud, and the gorgeous magnificence with which his new nuptials had just been solemnised. Blinded by passion, he noticed not the silence of his wretched child, until an exclamation from one of her women aroused his attention, and he discovered that his words had ceased to torture. The shock had been too overwhelming, and the princess lay apparently dead before him. A scene of terrible confusion ensued: high above the lamentations of the attendants were heard the execrations of Shoojah against the destroyer of his child. In vain did the weeping ayah implore him to quit the tent, that proper measures might be taken for the recovery of the princess. Heedless of entreaties and opposition, he threw himself beside the insensible body, and calling upon Allah to witness and avenge his wrongs, he solemnly invoked upon the head of the artful Aurungzebe the bitter curses of rebellious children, and perpetual family discord.

Heavily were these denunciations fulfilled in after-years. Though seated upon the imperial throne of the Moguls, with even the wildest visions of his ambition fully realised, yet amidst

all the splendour which surrounded him, the heart of Aurungzebe was a prey to sorrow, caused by the ill-concealed hatred, and ultimate rebellion of his undutiful sons.

So long did the death-like swoon of the hapless Aẹsha continue, that even the passionate exclamations of Shoojah were silenced by alarm; and when at length the symptoms of returning consciousness appeared, he suffered himself to be led from her tent, and retiring to his own, spent the whole of that miserable night in arranging the plans of vengeance to be prosecuted on the ensuing day. Soon after his departure, the princess slowly opened her eyes, and signing to the other attendants to withdraw, she was left alone with the faithful ayah, whose joy at her beloved mistress's recovery vented itself in rapturous thanksgiving and expressions of fondness and delight.

"My poor Hafeez," said the princess, in a faltering voice, "your rejoicing will soon change into sorrow; for I feel within me that the bolt has sped, and soon, very soon, I shall be numbered with those who have passed away. Does not our holy Koran tell us, that

when the angel of death is approaching, he casts from a distance, over his victim, the shadow of his wings? That shadow is now stealing over my spirit, a mist is fast gathering around me, and before all becomes dark, I would impress upon you my last injunctions, and obtain your solemn promise to see them faithfully fulfilled. To you, and to their father only, is known the secret of my infants' birth, and to his care I charge you to commit them, as the dying bequest of his long-loved Aesha. When I am no more, lose not a moment in seeking the Sultan Mahmoud, who is now but a short day's journey from our camp, too closely watched by his tyrant father to dare to venture near his dying wife, for such indeed, in the eyes of Heaven, I am! Tell him that Aḳsha loved him to the last, and full well knew that cruel force alone had torn him from her, and compelled him to fight in the lists of her father's foes. Bid him to cherish his babes with the same tenderness he once lavished on their unfortunate mother; and charge him, as he values my last request, to guard the secret of their birth from the Emperor Aurungzebe,

that they may be reared in peaceful seclusion, far from the crimes and sorrows of a court. Hafeez, the shadow deepens! the light is fading fast! Allah! can this be death? Mahmoud, my beloved, farewell!"

All was over! with this fondly cherished name still hovering on her lips, the broken heart of the princess ceased to beat, and her gentle spirit for ever took its flight from a world which had dealt with it so harshly.

Before the setting rays of another day's sun had thrown a golden beauty over the earth, Hafeez with her infant charge stood, in the presence of the Prince Mahmoud. Her melancholy tale was told, and the anguished victim of a father's mad ambition lay stricken with heavy woe upon the ground. Surrounded by spies, he dared not long indulge in unavailing sorrow, and the imperative necessity of providing a safe asylum for his new-found treasures, soon roused the unhappy prince to exertion, bringing hastily to maturity those plans of vengeance which had long been floating crudely in his mind. Rendered desperate by grief, and loathing the position of nominal honour but

actual degradation, which he occupied, he at once determined to cast off his allegiance, elude the vigilance of his guards, and that very night to engage under the banners of Shoojah, in open rebellion against his father.

No sooner were these bold measures decided upon than they were carried into execution. Pressing his infant daughters with passionate love to his heart, round the arm of each one he bound those costly gems worn only by the imperial children of the house of Delhi, and hastily naming one Aesha, and the other Zelma he committed them again to the charge of their faithful ayah, directing her to proceed by a circuitous road, to join him the next day at the camp of Shoojah. Disguised as a Gora Walla (or horse-keeper), he contrived to effect his escape, and within six hours had thrown himself at his uncle's feet, detailed the story of his wrongs, his forced marriage, and undiminished love for the lost Aesha, and solemnly pledged himself to embrace the side of Shoojah in the struggle for empire between him and his brother Aurungzebe.

This assurance was indeed a balm to the

wounded heart of Shoojah. With the conviction of his nephew's innocence, all his early partial affection for him revived, and in all the harmony and confidence of former days, the two princes arranged their plans of vengeance, swearing never to deviate from them until they had effected the final extirpation of the tyrant from the land.

In the meantime, confusion and alarm were rife in the camp of Aurungzebe as soon as the flight of the young prince became known. The strictest search was instituted; and imperative orders forbade, under penalty of death, the ingress or egress of a single soul, until some clue should be obtained to the discovery of Sultan Mahmoud's retreat.

The Emperor sat alone in his splendid pavilion, brooding with heavy heart over this unfortunate calamity, when tidings were brought to him that a woman with attendants bearing two richly dressed infants, had been detected in the act of stealthily quitting the camp. "Admit her," exclaimed the Emperor in a voice of thunder, "I will examine her myself; and in another instant the trembling

Hafeez stood before him. But alike in vain were his threats and promises to extort from her any knowledge of the prince's movements. The infants she protested were her own, and that she was merely removing them to a safer shelter than the camp now afforded, intending to perform the journey during the cool hours of night, in consideration of their tender age.

The probability of the woman's story imposed even upon the suspicious Aurungzebe. He was upon the point of ordering her to be dismissed, when a cry from one of the babes attracted his attention, and he desired it should be uncovered and presented to him. Quick as lightning the Emperor's eagle eye caught sight of the diamond amulet, which flashed in bright reflection of the surrounding lamps, upon the arm of the child. Another glance, and he recognised, engraved on the setting which surrounded the gem, those mystic characters which formed the name of his eldest born son.

"Seize the vile slave!" he exclaimed, pointing to the terror-struck woman, "and let,

tortures wring from her the truth. Wretch! wouldst thou avert a death of lingering torments? Say on the moment whence came those jewels, and how durst thou decorate thy base-born offspring with gems worn only by the descendants of the royal house of Tamerlane?"

"Lord of the earth!" said the trembling Hafeez, "the light of thy wisdom shines like the sun, and warms into life that truth so deep-hidden within the heart of thy prostrate slave. Her life is in thy hands; take it, oh mighty King! but first hear the secret which none else can relate, and to which none but thy royal ear must listen."

The attendants were dismissed, and with the confidenee of sudden inspiration, Hafeez boldly claimed for her infant charge the protection and love of their paternal grandfather! Kindling into eloquence, as she rapidly sketched the history of their young mother's sorrows and early death, and their impetuous father's despair, she thus addressed him:

"Sire! thou art the ruler of a mighty

empire! at thy feet even princes crouch in the dust; and whithersoever thou goest, thy wisdom and greatness are pre-eminent! Yet a day may come when all these glorious gifts by Allah bestowed, thou wouldst gladly barter for the priceless treasure of a human creature's love, for that pure affection which neither riches nor honours can purchase. Take now these lovely babes! they are of thy royal blood, and as thy royal offspring rear them! Show them a father's fondness; and mark, dread Lord, my heaven-directed words! when age comes stealing on, as come it will, and thou feelest in the midst of all thy grandeur, the cruel desolation of an unloved and unloving heart, then bethink thee of the children whom thy hand has fostered, and their clinging affection will shed a balm over thy wounded spirit, a halo over thy declining years!"

Unconsciously had Hafeez touched a chord which was ever prone to vibrate in the bosom of Aurungzebe. Constrained alike by his ambition and policy, to act the part of a stern, severe father, yet often in secret did he pine, as he reflected upon the gradual alienation of

all his children, and shudderingly anticipated the isolated old age which was before him. The faithful Hafeez watched, in trembling hope, the softening expression of the Emperor's countenance, whilst thoughts, such as these, were rapidly passing through his mind, and he appeared at length to turn an attentive ear to the long-disregarded whispers of one of those good angels mercifully appointed by Allah to watch over erring mortals from their birth, and guard them from the evil suggestions of fallen spirits.

A faint cry from one of the infants aroused him from his abstraction, and bending on both a look of melting pity, the icy barrier which had so long encompassed his heart, suddenly gave way. The tide of human affection gushed uninterruptedly in, and the great, the mighty Aurungzebe wept, as he folded the little innocents to his throbbing breast.

The arrangements for their future provision were immediately entered upon, with that promptitude and decision which always characterised the Emperor's proceedings.

His first care was to secure the faithful services of Hafeez for his new found-treasures; binding her to eternal secresy upon the subject of their birth, and exacting from her a solemn assurance that the Sultan Mahmoud should never, through her means, become acquainted with the place of their retreat; in short, that all communication should for ever cease between them. These conditions were unhesitatingly conceded by Hafeez, who was well aware of the unstable and impetuous character of the Prince, and his consequent unfitness for the charge of his youthful daughters; but recalling the dying injunctions of her beloved mistress, she implored the Emperor to place them in some secluded spot, where, in accordance with their mother's last request, they might be reared "far from the crimes and sorrows of a court." Her prayer was granted; a beautiful grove in the neighbourhood of Ahmednuggur was selected for the site of a residence for the royal children; and under the magical influence of wealth and power, a lovely abode was soon ready for their reception,

named by the Emperor himself "The Sisters' Palace."

In this calm, blissful retreat, the sweet daughters of Aesha grew apace. Shrouded like modest violets from the gaze of man, they knew of no greater happiness than the occasional visits of their adored father, by which endearing name it was the joy of Aurungzebe to be addressed. Often in the midst of his turbulent career did his heart turn with irrepressible longing to the bower which contained these buds of beauty, now fast expanding into the grace of early womanhood: and often, when it was supposed that indisposition had confined him to his apartments, did he escape from the heartless splendour of his court, to revel in the enjoyment of Aesha's innocent prattle, and listen to the sweet strains of Zelma's bird-like voice.

On these happy occasions, all cares were cast aside; he was no longer the mighty Emperor of the Moguls, the stern, unrelenting tyrant, whose nod was fate, whose fiat was unquestionable; but the tender father, tasting

with keen relish the joys of domestic life, and luxuriating in the caresses of his gentle children. To them his name and rank were alike unknown; and not unfrequently did they relate to him, in wondering accents, the tales which had reached even their secluded retreat, of the deeds of daring valour and unsparing cruelty committed by the all-powerful Emperor Aurungzebe. Their innocent commentaries upon his actions, uttered with all the freedom and unconsciousness of artless nature, were to the isolated despot the most searching lessons which he ever received, more than once tending to soften the severity of his decrees, but still more frequently inflicting pangs of remorse and paroxysms of alarm, lest, notwithstanding all his precautions, he should ever be identified in their minds with the ruthless tyrant, whose very name inspired them with terror.

The catastrophe so long dreaded was near at hand. In compliance with the Emperor's orders, no stranger was permitted by the watchful Hafeez to set foot within the sacred precincts of the "Sisters' Palace," with the

exception of one wandering borah or pedlar, whose various wares and glittering toys were inspected by the twin girls with eager curiosity; consequently these visits were anticipated with child-like delight, as forming quite an era in their uneventful lives, and were hailed even by Hafeez with interest, as bringing to her tidings from the world she had so long forsaken.

It was thus she had become acquainted with the imprisonment of the unfortunate Sultan Mahmoud, by his father's orders, in the fortress of Gwalior; and as year after year sped on, the same answer met her anxious inquiries for his fate: "He yet languishes in dreary, hopeless captivity." Though struggling to conceal the agitation which this subject always excited, it passed not unobserved by the borah, whose calm, passionless demeanour gave no indication of the burning curiosity which consumed him, to penetrate the evident mystery, which, like an atmosphere of cloud, encircled this sequestered spot. The sweet sisters had heard with horror this fearful tale of a father's cruelty towards

his eldest born. Their gentle natures were unable to realise such monstrous crime; and with drooping spirits they awaited their beloved visitor's approach, trusting to receive from his lips the coveted assurance, that this black story was but a fable designed for their amusement, and that the good Allah formed not creatures to defile his beautiful world with sins of so deep a dye.

Thus reasoned the lovely twins, as they recounted to their panic-stricken father the history of his own daring, reckless ambition, which like an evil spirit, had instigated him to the commission of incredible crimes, commencing in early life with rebellion against his aged father, deepening in maturer years into unnatural warfare, and treachery towards his brothers, until they reached that black climax of revolting cruelty, when the heart becoming totally hardened, he could dare to sleep after consigning his wretched son to a dreary, perpetual imprisonment.

"Father!" exclaimed Zelma, "tell us that such things cannot be! we know, we feel they cannot! yet fain would we hear from thy dear

lips, that in those busy scenes of worldly cares and perils, from which thy fostering hand has sheltered us, sins such as these could never enter!"

Turning suddenly her loving face towards the tortured man, she recoiled in terror at the changed expression of his features, which appeared convulsed with passion, darkening, like the tempest clouds, every vestige of that brightness, which, but a few minutes before, had lightened up his countenance with benevolence and beauty. With fearful violence on swept the whirlwind of uncontrollable rage: his good angel in sorrowing discomfiture withdrew, and the watchful demon at his side laughed with triumphant scorn, as the innocent Zelma fell bleeding to the ground, pierced to the heart by the dagger of Aurungzebe.

The hapless Aesha threw herself with shrieks of agony upon the body of her beloved sister; unconscious that life had for ever departed, she continued passionately embracing the bleeding form, whilst the attendants struggled to secure the frantic man,

now raving in unmistakable insanity. A scene of direful confusion ensued; all disguise was at an end, for the exclamations of the heart-broken Hafeez soon revealed to the startled domestics, that the perpetrator of this deed of violence was the mighty Aurungzebe, the powerful Emperor of the Moguls! Measures were immediately taken to convey him in secresy to his Imperial residence at the Furroh Bhag; and there for many days he lay tossing in the restless delirium of a brain-fever, perpetually acting over again in his troubled visions the fearful scene of lovely Zelma's murder; vehemently calling upon her to pity and forgive him, until these turbulent emotions became too violent for exhausted nature to endure, and he sunk into a state of total insensibility.

Long did this merciful torpor continue; and when at length the exertions of his physicians were crowned with success, he arose weak as an infant, a sad, and altered man. Upon regaining consciousness and recollection of the dreadful past, his first desire was to summon

Hafeez, and learn from her tidings of his bereaved, but still cherished Aḳsha.

"I dare not yet see my lovely innocent rose-bud," soliloquised the miserable man, "but I will weary Heaven with prayers to soften her heart with pity towards me. No longer shall she dwell in secret solitude, hiding her beauty from an eager world; but for the future, decked in gems, and surrounded by magnificence, she shall reign a Princess in her father's halls. And, oh merciful Allah! though thou turnest in anger from the words of a wretch so vile as I am, yet it may be that thou wilt listen to the prayers offered by the lips of innocence for a penitent sinner; so that, perchance, in some far off but blissful day, I too may kneel beside her, and feel with rapturous gratitude, that I, the man of sin, am forgiven."

Alas! these were but the hopeful visions of an awakened heart. As yet he had barely tasted of that bitter cup, which must soon be drained to the dregs; but the first sight of Hafeez, as in obedience to his command she stood before him, showed too plainly

to the startled man that the measure of his punishment was unfulfilled.

He had last seen her, with the erect bearing of a woman in the prime of life; he beheld her now, a decrepid, palsied wretch, bowed to the earth as if by the weight of advanced age. No longer trembling with awe at the dreaded glance of Aurungzebe, she regarded him with a look of proud defiance, the fire of despair burning gloomily in her sunken eye, as with words of scorn and abhorrence she taxed him with the murder of both her nurslings. No accent of pity, no tone of amelioration, was bestowed to soften the blow, which fell like a thunderbolt upon the guilty man. His Aesha was gone! the sunbeam to which he had fondly clung as his only comfort in this world, as his only guide towards a better, was for ever extinguished; and it was his ruthless hand had committed the foul deed.

"Tyrant," exclaimed Hafeez, "had one spark of human feeling existed within thy hardened bosom, thou must have known that the lovely buds, which blossomed together in life, could not be separated in death. The

bands of love united them too firmly to be severed even by the cruel steel, which, while it pierced the one, with sympathetic mercy broke the other's gentle heart. Like a crushed and dying flower, the lovely Aesha languished insensible to all around her, save when we attempted to withdraw the murdered Zelma from her tight embrace. The convulsive struggles which then shook her frame, too plainly showed that suffering was unallayed; that although the body lay stunned and powerless, the mind was still alive to impressions of agony.

"Hour after hour, I wept beside my precious child; no change was visible, but that the throbbings of her heart waxed fainter and fainter, and I felt that the angel's shadow was upon her. Yet not in gloom did her pure spirit depart. One golden ray, as of the setting sun, fell suddenly athwart her face, irradiating it with an expression of seraphic bliss. She sprang from the ground, waved her hand in triumphant joy, exclaiming: 'I come, my beloved one!' the next moment all was still, and I was left a blighted, withered thing, to

walk this world alone. Monster! behold thy work, and tremble from the summit of thy lofty throne, when thou thinkest of the slaughtered innocents, whose glory thou wilt never witness; of their captive father, doomed by thy cruelty to a dungeon's gloom; and of those countless victims so remorselessly sacrificed to thy mad ambition."

Longer she would have spoken, but Aurungzebe could hear no more. Anguish, despair, had seized upon his heart; the thraldom of pride was for ever broken, and prostrate on the ground he begged for mercy, vowing to devote his remaining days to contrition and penance for his life of crime. Nor were these idle words. With sternest scrutiny he surveyed his past career, tore from his eyes the veil with which worldly grandeur had so long obscured them, and beheld at last, in their true and sanguinary colours, the enormous iniquities of his previous life. With a meek and broken spirit, he roused himself to the performance of a sacred duty, by proclaiming to the world the relationship which had existed between him and the lovely twins, and

bestowing upon their obsequies the usual honours of a royal interment. Side by side lay these sweet scions of the house of Tamerlane; united in death, as they had ever been in life. Before many days had elapsed, the gates of Gwalior were thrown open by the command of Aurungzebe, and the long-imprisoned Sultan Mahmoud restored to his rights, knelt beside his children's early grave. And near that grave, which once enclosed within its shadowy bowers the fairy sister's palace, now stands a touching monument of a monarch's crime, a sinner's penitence, and a father's love. To this day, not even the most casual or hurried visitor to the city of Ahmednuggur, would dream of departing without first dropping a tear of pity over "The Sisters' Tomb."

CHAPTER XVI.

CANTONMENT AND CHURCH OF AHMEDNUGGUR — CLIMATE — GARDENS — SOCIETY — EXCURSION IN A STEAMER — RESULTS ATTENDANT UPON FREQUENT CHANGE OF STATION AND SOCIETY — CONCLUSION.

CHAPTER XVI.

AHMEDNUGGUR has been for several years the established depôt of the British artillery belonging to the Bombay Presidency, and is consequently provided with noble barracks, and accommodation for a large body of men; including the lines apportioned to the regiment of Native infantry always stationed in this cantonment. A distance of four miles divides the European from the Native Lines; and impartially situated mid-way between them, stands the neat little church, sufficiently large, however, to contain all the English population of the place.

Truly a pleasing sight it is, in this land of expatriation and paganism, to watch on a Sabbath afternoon, the approach of our well-appointed English soldiers towards the holy house of God; to see them with lowly reverence and uncovered heads, kneel before the altar, repeating those same prayers which for centuries past their forefathers have cherished; to mark the tear of consciousness stealing down some sun-burnt face, as in the course of our comprehensive Litany allusion is made to "the fatherless children and widows, and all that are desolate." Then busy memory brings vividly before the mind's eye, those loved and helpless ones left in their distant home; and with faith and fervour is the "Good Lord" besought "to succour, help, and comfort them."

Far different from the soul-stirring music of the chimes of England, is the modest tinkle of the single bell which here invites us to repair to the unadorned temple of Almighty God; yet there is a touching beauty in the tones, as they fall upon the ear, bringing with them associations and recollections of

careless childhood, happy youth, and "Home, sweet home." How often have we thought, that should it ever be permitted us again to set foot upon our native shores, no sounds would strike with such deep and thrilling interest upon our hearts, as those which issue from "the Sabbath bells of England!"

The climate of Ahmednuggur is generally considered healthy; although from the extreme dryness of the air it disagrees with many constitutions, by producing a tendency to torpor, and disease of the liver, more especially during the cold season. The rains, however, are delightful: just a sufficient quantity falls to ensure moisture without damp; and perhaps in no part of our Indian possessions is horticulture carried on more successfully than in Nuggur. A noble aqueduct conveys water from one end of the camp to the other, passing through several gardens, and carrying fertility wherever it goes, causing beautiful flowers, and delicious English fruits to flourish in abundance and perfection; and we have even seen beds of strawberries so thickly studded with their scarlet gems, that

to resist the temptation became impossible, and despite the eighth commandment we felt ourselves irresistibly impelled to "fall to" and make a hearty meal. In many gardens the walks are divided by luxuriant hedges of myrtle neatly clipt, but not so closely as to destroy the delicate white blossoms, which fill the air with its fragrant perfume.

The fine Arungabad grape also grows here in perfection, having taken so kindly to the soil, that a stranger may suppose it to be quite indigenous. It is trained here, as throughout the Deccan, in a far more graceful form than in the wine districts of France and Germany; being attached to a roof of trellis-work, sufficiently lofty to allow a tall man to stand upright underneath, and gather at will the clusters which hang down in rich profusion. We have frequently seen a single berry measuring upwards of two inches in length, and which in flavour might fairly compete with the far-famed grape of Portugal. Altogether, though as before remarked, Ahmednuggur has little or no pretensions to picturesque scenery, it will always be

considered a pretty and interesting place, from the general air of comfort and cultivation pervading the entire cantonment.

We found the society of Nuggur absolutely delightful. The most hearty welcome greeted us on every side; and could our stay have been protracted to months instead of weeks, every hour of our time might have been pleasantly occupied in exploring excursions for the mornings, and the fulfilment of various engagements for the evenings' amusement.

We have before commented upon that most fascinating of all external accomplishments, cordiality of manner; and perhaps the charm which its practise must inevitably diffuse over society in any part of the world, is no where more evident than amongst the limited circles of an out-station life in India. We must confess it has ever appeared to us, as the test alike of good breeding and good feeling, to dissipate as speedily as possible the constraint and "mauvaise honte" which too frequently attend upon a first introduction; more especially in those cases where the

visitor is, like ourselves, afflicted with the unfortunate disqualification of shyness.

We have often admiringly watched the graceful ease with which the real gentlewoman, alone, can perform this delicate feat of social generalship. First, dexterously striking upon topics of general interest, to induce her frightened-looking guest to open his lips, she imperceptibly gains ground in dispersing the mists of embarrassment; so that, in the course of a quarter of an hour, all reserve and stiffness having disappeared, he finds himself chatting upon the pleasant footing of an old acquaintance, and, finally, makes an unwilling exit, with the feeling not only of intense enjoyment of his visit, but with the consciousness that he never before appeared to such advantage in conversation. So true is it, that an amiable and intelligent woman has it in her power to elicit knowledge and develope talent, which even the owner himself was before unconscious of possessing.

It may be objected, that the gift of conversational power, is neither equally nor universally distributed in this world; conse-

quently, what to some is but a pleasing exertion, to others becomes an almost impossible task. But from this doctrine we broadly dissent, and could readily adduce a hundred instances to prove that neither talent nor learning is requisite to infuse a spirit of enjoyment into an introductory meeting; but simply that kindly feeling of fraternity and good-will towards our fellow-creatures, which characterises the sincere christian of refined mind.

The truth of this remark strikes us with double force at this moment, as we recal the circumstances of a short coasting voyage made in a steamer some few years back. It was a delightful morning when we stept on board, and the appearance of several passengers assembled on deck, gave a fair promise of sociability being added to the pleasures of the trip; so, hurrying over as speedily as possible the few necessary arrangements of luggage, in the cabin below, we hastened up stairs in eager anticipation of beguiling the time by a pleasant chat.

Now, as before hinted, we are of that

unfortunate class of mortals too apt, at first sight, "to be rather backward in coming forward;" and it soon appeared that every soul on board was in the same predicament, for we kept eyeing each other with that peculiar half-shy, half-suspicious glance, which only Englishmen can perpetrate; and at the expiration of half an hour not one solitary syllable had been exchanged, nor did there appear the remotest chance of any of the party summoning sufficient moral courage to break the ice which had thus congealed all our faculties.

This was desperate work! But, "presto!" like magic the scene changed, as up rushed from the depths below, that most fascinating of all companions—a travelled Irish gentleman, with the full, rich humour of his country, polished and refined by intercourse with other lands.

He took in at one glance the state of affairs, and to our dying day we can never forget the irresistibly comic expression of his handsome face as he surveyed the spell-bound circle, and boldly dashed to the rescue. His first hearty exclamation, "did it," at once.

"Hurrah! gentlemen! here's a delicious day! and what a lucky dog I am to fall in with such an agreeable party, when I didn't expect to meet a soul!"

Within ten minutes every tongue was loosened. The most silent-looking proved that they could speak, and to some purpose, too; whilst our indefatigable friend rattled on with unflagging spirits and national wit, striving, without any apparent effort, to set every one at his ease, until the unanimous peals of merriment around proclaimed his complete success.

"That man will be a god-send wherever he goes!"

In an out-station life, the society must necessarily be included within the limits of one circle, consequently it becomes the interest of each individual to contribute his or her best endeavours towards the maintenance of general harmony and social intercourse; so that, in the arrangement of a snug little party, no such formidable impediment may occur as "the impossibility of asking Mrs. A——

to meet Mrs. B——, for they are not on speaking terms."

Much naturally depends upon the heads of society, to give a tone and spirit to the entire machine; as, by discouraging all petty bickerings in the outset, and resolutely turning a deaf ear to the idle gossip and gosippers, too apt to prevail in every part of the world, but more especially in a limited circle, a more elevated and intellectual train of conversation may be easily established, than the wearisome discussion of personalities with its never-ending train of attendant evils.

Under such happy circumstances did we find the society of Ahmednuggur at the period of our first visit, now some years ago. The three presiding members were essentially gentlemen, and the frequent réunions under their hospitable roofs were rendered too attractive by the combined charms of music, dancing, and refined conversation, to be easily relinquished even by the most inveterate scandal-mongers, who were consequently obliged to restrain their vicious propensities, or hide their diminished heads.

It is with a feeling of almost melancholy pleasure that one revisits an out-station after an interval of some few years, and finds that every former friend has departed. New regiments, new civilians have replaced those old familiar faces, which were wont to greet us so heartily of yore; and although, indeed, the place itself may remain unchanged, it becomes difficult to persuade ourselves that it is so, from the total remodelling of society which has occurred.

Under usual circumstances, a regiment is rarely allowed to remain stationary beyond three years; and though no limit is prescribed for the residence of civilians, it may be fairly calculated as averaging the same period, owing to the frequent changes of appointment resulting from deaths, sick leave, and furloughs.

Thus it happens, that one may return a perfect stranger to that same spot, which but a few years before was regarded in the light of a home; but it must necessarily be so in Indian life, constituted as the service now is, and notwithstanding the many trials to be

encountered, caused by the sudden, and often final separation of friends and dispersion of families, to say nothing of the local interest existing for the native inhabitants and general improvement of the place. This frequent change of station and society has its moral as well as physical advantages, in preventing that stagnation of mental and bodily energy, which frequently arises from too protracted a continuance in an unvarying or monotonous mode of life.

An interchange of ideas and opinions is essential to the health of the human mind, which deprived of this salutary counterpoise to its natural self-sufficiency, becomes an easy prey to the narrowing influence, the soul-contracting prejudices of bigotry and intolerance. Nothing in this world was created to stand still—we must either advance or recede. The faculties of the mind must either bud, blossom, and bear fruit, or droop, ungrafted by superior intelligence, and prematurely fade away. Indeed we have often observed, that to collision even with an inferior in acquirement and understanding, is

clearly attributable a vastly beneficial effect upon our tempers and powers of forbearance, even though the expression of more enlarged views should fail in imparting conviction to the opposing party. It has ever been permitted, from the world's infancy to its present maturity, "that offences come," that mankind should differ. But when, oh! when will that glorious time arrive, that with elevated faith and subdued passions, we may all "agree to differ?"

Not altogether irrelevant to this subject is a passage, written many years ago by James Montgomery, and which touches so forcibly upon the influence possessed by every human being in a greater or less degree over his fellow-creatures, that we feel irresistibly impelled to transcribe it, trusting that it may prove equally suggestive of the same serious train of thought in others as it was to ourselves.

"Every individual born into the world, and who has lived long enough to excite any emotion of love, antipathy or fear in the

breast of another, has done something towards making the world of the living what it is; and every one that dies after having filled his station in society, however humble, leaves the world something different from what it would have been, had he never existed. Not one of us knows how far our personal influence extends over those around us; much less, how remotely what we have been, and said, and done, may affect those who come after, when we are dead and forgotten. Like the cedars of Lebanon, that flourished before the days of David and Solomon, which, though felled and wrought for ten thousand common purposes, were yet the progenitors of trees from whose timbers the Temple of God was framed and beautified."

Wide and manifold have been our wanderings in India, extending over an uninterrupted period of several years, since first we set foot upon her majestic shores; and many a spot have we visited, where the glorious ruins of

marble palaces and stately tombs, silently, but touchingly remind us of the boundless magnificence — the almost incredible riches which in former days pervaded this land. But we have already exceeded the prescribed limits of this little work, and must for the present abstain; though perchance upon some future occasion, we may crave the reader's companionship and sympathy in our various excursions to the more distant out-stations of this Presidency. For we have traversed many an extensive realm, explored the capitals of mighty sovereigns, and traced the vestiges of their despotic sway in those wondrous, undecaying works of art, which, like the Pyramids and cities of ancient Egypt, could not, in a world's life-time, be accomplished without the compulsory labour of millions.

After a careful analysis of our Indian career, we arrive at the conclusion, that the stream of life glides on in a smoother, a more unimpassioned course here than in England. It is true we are necessarily debarred from many of the vivid enjoyments, the higher order of intellectual amusements, and the

refined luxuries which surround the favoured wealthy of our native land. But on the other hand, we escape much of the acute suffering to which an English life is inevitably exposed. We allude not merely to the sunless days, the rigourous clime, the depressing tendency of the cloudy, fog-laden atmosphere; but more especially to those soul-harrowing instances of want, those heart-wringing cases of sudden destitution which swarm around us in endless variety wherever we turn, and which scarcely any possible amount of private means is sufficient to alleviate.

In this country, every one—at least among the English inhabitants—is possessed of a certain income, always sufficient to secure the necessaries, and even comforts of life; and though occasional involvment and distress must now and then occur, arising from individual extravagance, or commercial reverses, they are generally of such a nature as to admit of a satisfactory compromise in the former, or to demand an immediate departure from the Presidency in the latter case. Thus, as regards our compatriots, we are spared all

close proximity to poverty under its most abject and repulsive form; whilst the simple habits of the native poor—for whom a mere rag suffices as clothing, and a handful of grain for food—render it easily practicable for every one to administer efficient relief, as a small coin barely exceeding in value the English penny, is amply sufficient for a day's support to an entire family. Altogether, we boldly assert, that though the aggregate amount of happiness may not be so great in India as in England; unquestionably the awarded proportion of pain and suffering is less. The balance is thus beautifully and equally poised, and great cause for thankfulness we have, that whilst compelled by "stern fate's decrees" to remain long exiled from the English shores, our lot should be cast in so fair a land, where not alone content but happiness is to be found.

Still there are moments, we cannot conceal it, when every expatriated man must feel irrepressible longings to visit once more his distant home; and sadly, at such times, the heart sighs responsive to the truthful, pathetic

exclamation of Mrs. Hemans' tuneful muse, that notwithstanding

> "The fire-flies' red light
> With its quick glancing splendour illumines the night;
> Yet I read in each tint of the skies and the earth
> How distant my steps from the land of my birth."

The year 1852 will be one of the deepest import to the future welfare of India, as then must be arranged the terms on which is to be replaced in the hands of its present possessors that wonder-working talisman, by which twenty-four private gentlemen, sitting in a gloomy room in one of the most dingy quarters of smoky London, are enabled to sway the destinies of this mighty empire, so many thousand miles distant, and to regulate in its minutest details the government of so many millions of their fellow-subjects. In other words, the Imperial Parliament in the approaching session, will have to decide the important question of the renewal of the East India Company's Charter, a system of polity

so defective and inconsistent in theory, so powerful and successful in practice, which has no prototype in the past history of the world, and is not likely to have any parallel in the future. Whilst we confidently rely on the deliberative wisdom of that august assembly, making such changes in the temporal government of the country as the altered state of circumstances demand; we trust they will not shut their eyes to the awful responsibility which devolves upon them as Christian legislators, to make more ample provision, not only for the spiritual wants of their fellow-countrymen who have made this, for a time, the land of their adoption, and which is, at present, in many instances very deficient; but also for the moral and intellectual improvement of the great body of the heathen population, as the most effectual means of dispelling the clouds of superstition, and eventually bringing them into the same fold with ourselves: for much as we should deprecate any endeavour, however well intended, to propagate the pure doctrines of Christianity by compulsory means, we see a wide difference between treading in

the steps of Mahomed, and pursuing a judicious system of enlightened and persuasive conversion on a far larger scale than has been hitherto attempted. Nor, in order to show what has been already effected with comparatively slender means, and under circumstances of great difficulty, by the pioneers of our holy religion, may it be considered out of place here to insert a brief summary of the result of missions in India and Ceylon:

"They have founded three hundred and nine native churches, containing seventeen thousand three hundred and fifty-six members, or communicants, of whom five thousand were admitted on the evidence of their being converted. These church members form the nucleus of a Native Christian community, comprising one hundred and three thousand individuals, who regularly enjoy the blessings of Bible instruction, both for young and old. The efforts of Missionaries, in the cause of education, are now directed to thirteen hundred and forty-five day-schools, in which eighty-three thousand seven hundred boys are

instructed through the medium of their own vernacular language; to seventy-three boarding-schools, containing nineteen hundred and ninety-two boys, chiefly Christian, who reside upon the Missionaries' premises, and are trained up under their eye; and to one hundred and twenty-eight day-schools, with fourteen thousand boys and students, receiving a sound scriptural education, through the medium of the English language. Their efforts in female education embrace three hundred and fifty-four day-schools, with eleven thousand five hundred girls: and ninety-one boarding-schools, with two thousand four hundred and fifty girls, taught almost exclusively in the vernacular languages."

Thus far then, the mighty work of conversion has proceeded. But here we feel assured it will not be permitted to stop; for no one, who has traversed these almost interminable plains, or ascended those majestic mountains, and looked down upon the multitudes of our fellow creatures that surround us—no one, who has even traced on the map the boundary line of our Eastern empire, and perused the

history of the different nations which compose it, can avoid having that soul-searching enquiry forced upon him—for what purpose was it ordained, that we, the comparatively few, inhabitants of a mere island, should occupy this vast territory, should wave the sceptre of command over the countless millions of this mighty country?

England was selected by the Almighty Disposer of all things to exercise sovereign rule over India's wide-spread empire; that in His good time, and through His wisely appointed means, the bigoted Mussulmaun, the erring Parsee, and the benighted Hindoo, should learn to know "that Saviour, whose every act, whilst on earth, was either a miracle or an example."

THE END.

LONDON:
Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.

BOM
915.479
Lif/Lif
42448
Life ..... (F. W.)
Life in Bombay,
and the neighbouring
out-stations. 1852.

Digitized with financial assistance from

on 07 January, 2017